

Yeltsin, Clinton to meet soon — Moscow

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin and new U.S. President Bill Clinton are expected to meet soon in a neutral country, Mr. Yeltsin's press service said. Mr. Clinton called the Russian leader to discuss future relations between the two countries as well as to promise continuing U.S. support for Russia's democratic reforms.

Yeltsin and Clinton agreed to instruct their respective foreign ministers to meet in order to prepare a summit in a third country in the near future, the Russian statement said. It gave no precise date. Mr. Clinton's inauguration on Jan. 20 but the U.S. leader's aides were more circumspect, saying only they hoped a meeting could be held some time this year. Washington and Moscow agree there should be no lull in bilateral ties after Mr. Clinton replaced George Bush. An early summit with Yeltsin, under heavy fire from conservatives at home over the course of economic reforms.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily newspaper published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية، غير خاضعة للحكم بالسلطة من المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، والرأي

Assad holds talks with Solana

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana discussed the Middle East peace process and bilateral relations Saturday, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) said. Talks in the meeting, attended by Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa, also dealt with Arab-European relations, SANA added. Earlier in the day, Mr. Solana held talks with Mr. Sharaa where the two discussed the situation in the Middle East, ways of boosting bilateral relations, the issue of Palestinian expelles and relations between Syria and the European Community. Mr. Solana was quoted as saying on his arrival in Damascus that the mass expulsion of Palestinians by Israel was illegal and a bad mistake. Mr. Solana, who flew in from Jordan for a 24-hour visit, was welcomed on arrival by Mr. Sharaa. The expulsion "is illegal under all international standards, bad and a big political mistake from the humanitarian point of view," SANA quoted Mr. Solana as saying in an arrival statement.

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Kaaba washed ahead of Ramadan

MECCA (AP) — The Kaaba, Islam's holiest shrine, was washed Saturday in the traditional ritual that takes place a month before the Holy Month of Ramadan. Meccan Vice-Governor Prince Saud Ben Abdul Mohsen led the traditional ceremony on behalf of King Fahd. Preachers of the Grand Mosque, where the Kaaba is located, and Medina's Mosque of the Prophet, along with senior government officials, ambassadors of Muslim countries and a number of worshippers participated in the ceremony which takes place twice a year. The floor of the Kaaba was cleaned with ceramic brooms and water from Zamzam, the well inside the Grand Mosque which has been running since the early boyhood of Prophet Ismail.

Report: Iran has nuclear bomb

MUNICH (AP) — Iran has acquired nuclear weapons from Kazakhstan and Tajikistan and is working on a delivery system for the bombs, a German news magazine said Saturday. Focus, a recently started weekly, said two nuclear missile warheads, an atomic bomb and an atomic grenade were supplied to Iran by the two former Soviet republics via a third, Turkmenistan, one year ago. The magazine, in a summary of the article provided to other news media in advance of its publication Monday, said its information came from "U.S. intelligence sources," which it did not identify. The warheads had a power of 40 kilotons, or equal to 40,000 tons of TNT, Focus said. They have been made launch-ready by Russian experts, it said.

Knesset members in Cairo, may see PLO

CAIRO (R) — Two Israeli members of parliament have arrived in Cairo and may meet leading members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Airport sources said the Knesset members, Ran Cohen and Benny Temkin of the left-wing Meretz Party, arrived in the Egyptian capital Friday. On Saturday the Egyptian paper Al Ahran quoted informed Palestinian sources as saying PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat would meet the Knesset members for two days next week. But the PLO ambassador to Cairo, Saeed Kamal, linked a decision on the meeting with the fate of Palestinians expelled by Israel last month and struck in South Lebanon. "No decision has been taken by the Palestinian leadership up until now on the matter of a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue at the level of the Knesset," Mr. Kamal told reporters on Saturday. "The first subject before the Palestinian leadership is the expellees... the fate of this dialogue will be decided after the solution of the subject of the expellees," he added. Last week the Knesset repealed a law banning contacts with the PLO.

Angola claims downing South African plane

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The Angolan government said Saturday it had shot down a South African transport plane flying out of Jamba, the old headquarters in the south of the rebel movement UNITA. "A South African Hercules C-130, flying from Jamba with supplies for National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) troops, was hit by government forces yesterday afternoon, crashing in Cachichila-Chiloango," said a statement from the general staff of the Angolan government forces, adding that the incident occurred Friday.

U.N. team reports Iraqi cooperation

Baghdad laments lack of response to truce, sees 'Bush remnants' influencing Clinton

Combined agency dispatches

U.N. CHEMICAL weapons inspectors returned to the field Saturday and said Iraq was cooperating with them after a two-week delay caused by the latest confrontation between Baghdad and the West.

"I have no complaints, cooperation was good," team leader Paul Brough said after returning from a site north of the capital where thousands of chemical weapons are being destroyed under terms of the Gulf war ceasefire.

Mr. Brough's team resumed its field work under new Iraqi promises of cooperation, with U.N. inspectors after quarrel and conflict that included U.S. bomb and missile strikes Washington said were meant to force compliance with U.N. resolutions.

One day after the latest U.S. attack, against an alleged radar station in northern Iraq, Mr. Brough and his inspectors travelled to the Muthanna state establishment for pesticide production. It was Iraq's main chemical facility 100 kilometres northwest of Baghdad.

A highly-refined form of mustard gas, as well as sarin and tabun nerve agents, were produced at the plant, which covers 170 square kilometres.

It was heavily bombed by the allies during the Gulf war. Large amounts of chemical bombs, shells and warheads, as well as mustard gas and nerve agent stockpiles, were buried under the rubble and leaked.

U.N. inspectors estimated that Muthanna was capable of producing 2 1/2 tonnes of sarin nerve agent and five tonnes of mustard gas a day. They also concluded that the plant could manufacture VX, a nerve gas and one of the most toxic chemicals ever produced.

Iraqi technicians, under U.N. supervision, began destroying the Muthanna stockpile last year in a specially-built incinerator and hydrolysis plant. That work was interrupted when inspectors left Iraq for Christmas and New Year holidays. The inspectors were then blocked from returning when Baghdad refused to allow U.N. flights in an argument over the allied "no-fly" zone in southern Iraq.

Kevin St. Louis, head of the U.N. special commission field office in Baghdad that is in charge of eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, said full-scale destruction of mustard gas and nerve agent would probably begin Monday.

Meanwhile, an open letter to Bill Clinton in a newspaper published by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son expressed regret at the lack of response to Iraq's peace overtures and warned the new U.S. president not to play with fire.

The letter in Babel, published after the first two air strikes of the Clinton presidency and signed by leading columnist Mudhar Arafat, said dialogue was the only way to solve conflicts between nations.

The letter and a signed commentary in the army daily Al Qadisiyah suggested the emergency of a slightly harder line on Mr. Clinton, who moved into the White House Wednesday.

But the government newspaper Al Jumhuriyah suggested "remnants of the criminal Bush administration" were pushing Mr. Clinton.

(Continued on page 5)

Israelis hit Lebanon after bomb kills soldier

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli helicopter gunships blasted villages in South Lebanon Saturday, shortly after a roadside bomb killed an Israeli soldier and wounded two others, security sources said.

The sources said two Cobra gunships mounted five rocketing runs on the villages in the pine-woods of the Reihan mountain at sundown in Israel's first air raid on Lebanon this year.

An abandoned school building in one of the villages was demolished by a direct rocket hit, the sources said. They spoke on condition of anonymity.

They said they had no casualty report from the air assault. By police count, 42 people were killed and 108 wounded in 37 air raids Israel staged in Lebanon in 1992.

The raid came an hour after the roadside bomb went off as an Israeli patrol drove on a road opposite a cluster of villages controlled by Hizbollah (Party of God).

These villages in Iqlim Al Tufah later came under massive artillery and tank fire from Israeli positions in a self-styled "security zone" Israel occupies in South Lebanon, the sources said.

Two Israeli soldiers were also wounded in Saturday's bomb attack the sources said.

They said the roadside bomb blew up as an armoured patrol drove along a road east of the village of Arab Salim. One armoured troop carrier was destroyed.

The Shiite Muslim Amal group said its guerrillas planted the bomb and that it exploded as Israeli explosives experts tried to defuse it.

It said two of the experts were killed and four wounded. There was no immediate comment from Israel on the report. The Israeli casualties are the first this year in South Lebanon.

The area is far to the west of the icy piece of land where about 400 Palestinian expellees are stranded between Lebanese and Israeli lines.

Hariri sees new era

Lebanon's Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri has said his country had left 15 years of civil war behind and emerged as a nation of "peace and reconstruction," the New York Times reported in

Islamic Jihad is not interested in joining PLO

DAMASCUS (R) — Israel's expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians has brought the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) closer to its rivals in the Islamic movement Hamas — but not to the more radical Islamic Jihad.

"Our position is more militant towards the PLO. Our joining the PLO is not impossible, but not this PLO," Islamic Jihad's secretary general, Fathi Shukaki, told Reuters in an interview late Friday.

The two Islamic groups oppose the PLO's policy of peace talks with Israel and have won increasing support over the last year as Arab-Israeli negotiations failed to achieve progress.

But the crisis over the expellees, whom Israel accused of supporting Hamas and Islamic Jihad, has pushed at least Hamas and the PLO into dialogue.

Palestinian sources say the two sides realised they could no longer ignore one another and they recently met in Khartoum to discuss conditions for Hamas joining the PLO.

Islamic Jihad, which Dr. Shukaki said received its main practical support from the radical Islamic government in Iran, is taking a harder line.

Dr. Shukaki said he had contacts with supporters of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat but refused to meet the man himself "for many reasons."

Mr. Arafat, he said, "wants Islamic Jihad to be a tool in his hand."

Hamas has said it will join the PLO only if the PLO withdraws the Palestinian delegation from the current peace talks.

Dr. Shukaki said Islamic Jihad could contemplate joining only if the PLO reversed its acceptance of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242.

"In my opinion we cannot (acknowledge) the presence of Israel because this is against our religious rights. This is Palestine, this is not Israel. This is part of the Arab and Islamic world," Dr. Shukaki said.

"The Zionists do not have the right to have their state in Palestine. I think this is something temporary," he said.

Dr. Shukaki, a soft-spoken doctor trained in Egypt, gave the interview in a spartan but newly-decorated and furnished office in the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmuk, a maze of two and three-storey concrete blocks on the southern edge of Damascus.

He said there was no connection between his Islamic Jihad and Lebanese hostage-takers who had used the same name.

"Those are secret groups whose organisation, ideology, support and tactical operations are different. We are an open group with a known leadership."

Dr. Shukaki said Islamic Jihad realised that its actions in the occupied territories, where it has claimed responsibility for killing Israelis in a series of knife and gun attacks, would not destroy the Jewish state.

official told Reuters. "We said we were ready for it but we will only accept to deal with Palestinians, their private sector institutions as well as with the future Palestinian self-governing authority pending the final outcome of the final settlement."

He said the two sides would continue discussing the plan when the peace talks resume sometime early this year.

Under current Israeli regulations, people entering the West Bank through a Jordan River bridge can take in personal goods only.

Jordan continued to buy West Bank agricultural produce and quarry material of support the Palestinian economy but enforced tight border

Israel might allow Jordanian exports to West Bank

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

AMMAN — Israel has offered to lift its ban on Jordanian exports to the occupied West Bank, Jordanian officials said on Saturday.

The proposal could help Palestinians disengage from the Israeli economy during an interim period of self-rule.

Israel banned Jordan from sending goods to the West Bank after it occupied the area in the 1967 Middle East war. Both countries are still technically in a state of war.

"During the last round of peace talks (in December) the Israelis offered to lift the ban and allow Jordanian goods to go to the West Bank," one

der inspection rules to bar Israeli products in line with an Arab League economic boycott on the Jewish state.

Another official said Jordanian peace negotiators handed Israel a list of commodities which Amman could immediately sell to the more than 1.7 million Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

The list includes foodstuffs, pharmaceuticals, detergents, and refined oil derivatives.

"Among the key matters that still have to be settled is the issue of custom tariffs which Israel is insisting on, and on that key point there are many ideas," he said without giving details.

A flow of business into the West Bank would provide an



Iraqi workers repair the facade of Baghdad's Al Rashid Hotel which was hit in an American missile attack on Jan. 17 (AFP photo)

Evictees turn down ICRC aid; 17 of them airlifted to Haifa

MARJ AL ZOHOOR, Lebanon (Agencies) — Three British air force helicopters evacuated 17 Palestinian expellees from their icy tent camp in South Lebanon Saturday.

The expellees, four of them sick and 13 expelled by mistake last month, flew to the Israeli port of Haifa in an operation arranged by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

They and almost 400 other Palestinian evictees have been languishing in South Lebanon since Israel expelled them on Dec. 17.

Israel has said all these expelled by mistake will go straight to jail, not to their homes in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The 17 who left aboard the Wessex helicopters were torn between feelings of happiness because they were going back and sadness because they were leaving behind their "brothers."

Those staying gave them an emotional farewell.

The returning evictees, waving goodbye to their comrades, pushed their way through to the three waiting choppers, which took off in a rapid succession at sundown heading for Haifa.

"I'm very happy because I'm going back but at the same time I feel sad because I'm leaving my friends behind," said Maher Karim, 26, owner of a restaurant, as he hugged a friend.

The four ailing men included two who were wounded by Israeli shelling Dec. 21: Amjad Zamel, 22, who received a shrapnel wound in his jaw, and Wael Hindiyyeh, 32, who had a broken arm.

Two mistakenly expelled men, Mahmoud Aklan, 25, a taxi driver from the Gaza Strip, and Naim Al Ghol, 29, a merchant from the West Bank, refused to return.

The evictees' official spokes-

man, Abdul Aziz Rantisi, said the two men were staying "in solidarity with their fellow expellees," who want to force Israel to return all the exiles to their homes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The evictees also sent back three boxes of medical supplies brought aboard two Royal Air Force helicopters in the morning carrying a four-member team of the all-Swiss ICRC.

The Wessex 5 helicopters, dispatched from a British base in Cyprus, touched down on a narrow asphalt road near the camp at 10:10 a.m. (0810 GMT) after a brief stop in Haifa.

The evictees barred the ICRC team from entering their makeshift camp and the delegates worked out of two roadside centres 300 metres from the camp.

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Poverty can be stemmed, recommended the report, only through long-term plans mainly benefiting the limited-income groups.

The report estimated that 160,000 Jordanians are now unemployed and criticised the presence of 176,000 workers in the country.

The report urged the government to introduce long-term education reforms aimed at meeting the needs of the growing population and the labour market.

The committee called for an improvement in teachers' performance and standards, reforms at the national universities and vocational training programmes to meet the country's requirements of skilled manpower.

The committee commended the government's financial and monetary policies, which "have resulted in reestablishment of confidence in the country's economy."

The report noted that inflation was reduced to four per cent and Jordanian banks have increased their liquidity of Jordanian and foreign exchanges to create a good opportunity for investors. However, the report cautioned against directing the surplus in liquidity towards rampant consumption.

The committee referred to the question of securing sufficient funds to finance projects like infrastructure and more social service to cope with the growing needs of the population and the hundreds of thousands of expatriates who have returned home.

The report urged the government to remain committed to implementing investments and lay the infrastructure for investment projects that would in turn yield returns, enabling the government to pay back its dues.

The committee commended the government for arranging to pay the former Soviet Union's debts in commodities rather than in cash. It urged the government to follow this step with similar steps with other creditors.

Senate passes 1993 budget

AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper House of Parliament (Senate) Saturday endorsed the 1993 fiscal budget which was referred to it after endorsement by the Lower House.

The Senate approval came at a session attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Cabinet members during which the Senate listened to a report by its Financial Committee commending the government's performance and presenting proposals concerning problems of unemployment, poverty, education and agriculture.

The report, read out by Salem Masaadeh, the committee's rapporteur, noted with appreciation the following:

— A decline in the margin of deficit in terms of gross domestic product (from 28 per cent in 1988 to eight per cent in 1992);

— A decline in the rate of inflation from 25.7 per cent in 1989 to four per cent in 1992.

— A decline in the net amount of external debt from 223 per cent in 1989 to 127 per cent at the end of 1992 in terms of gross domestic product; and — A drop in the deficit in the balance of payment to less than 10 per cent at the start of this year.

The report also noted with appreciation the rise in the foreign currency reserves of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) to \$1.100 billion by the end of 1992.

But the report noted with regret the rise in the margin of poverty due, as it said, to per capita income decline between 1986 and 1992 by nearly 45 per cent and the rise in unemployment.

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(Continued on page 5)

Budget

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A Somali boy is comforted by a woman Friday after his mother died from sickness and hunger in the village of Darwanag, located 35 kilometres northwest of Mogadishu, the Somali capital on the Indian Ocean (AFP photo)

U.S. said working with allies on Somalia handover resolution

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States has begun consultations with allies on a formal United Nations resolution that would shift command of forces in Somalia to the world body, according to a senior State department official.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said consultations began more than a week ago "for a new resolution enlarging and strengthening the U.N. presence."

Ever since the extraordinary American-led effort began in December to use military troops to protect convoys bringing food to starving Somalis, the United States has encouraged participating countries to offer troops that would stay in the country after the Americans depart, he said.

"So it is from a practical matter something that we've been working on and now we're at the phase where we're starting to work on the U.N. resolution in consultation with others that will do that," the official said.

The first unit of U.S. Marines left Somalia for home Tuesday and Wednesday after handing over their duties in the famine-stricken southern town of Baidoa to Australian replacements.

The U.S.-led force, numbering 36,000 men from 20 countries, has secured Somalia's towns, air-

ports and ports, and escorted food convoys to the main famine centres.

The chief U.N. representative in Somalia, Ismat Kittani, disputed U.S. assertions Monday that the U.N. would take over total command of forces in Somalia in about two weeks.

The spokesman for U.S. forces in Somalia had said in Mogadishu he thought the handover from an American-led task force could be accomplished in "a couple of weeks."

U.N. sources said U.S. and United Nations officials had decided on a phased transition with two commands operating until the U.N. forces took control of most of the areas now run by American troops.

There are about 25,000 U.S. military personnel in Somalia now, along with 11,000 additional soldiers from 20 other countries. The United Nations expects to have 15,000 to 20,000 forces under its command after most American troops withdraw.

The Security Council must still adopt a resolution mandating the new operation and authorising rules of engagement.

Violence continues

A Somali youth climbed a wall at a U.S. Marine compound in

northern Mogadishu Friday and was shot to death after he threatened a sentry with a pistol, officials said.

Another Somali man was wounded by Marine gunfire as he and three others tried to run a roadblock set up on the street outside the compound moments after the initial shooting.

Also Friday, gunmen in Mogadishu opened fire at three relief agency vehicles, injuring four people, including a Swede, a U.N. official said.

The vehicles belonging to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Save the Children, and Swedish Relief, a Swedish aid agency, were attacked about 250 metres from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) office, said the official who did not want to be identified.

A Swede working for Swedish Relief suffered a minor injury on his

hand and a Somali working for the agency was also slightly injured, the official said. Two ICRC employees, believed to be Somalis, were also hurt, but the extent of their injuries was not known. No one was injured in the Save the Children vehicle, the official said.

The shooting at the Marine compound was the second shooting incident of the day.

Israel honours its harshest critic

TEL AVIV (AP) — To his fans, Yeshayahu Leibowitz is the modern incarnation of an angry old testament prophet. To his critics, he is a crank who delights in insulting Israel's most hallowed institutions.

The 90-year-old professor who says Israel should give up Arab land has been named to receive the Israeli prize for lifetime achievement.

The awarding of Israel's highest honour to its harshest critic has touched off an emotional debate that goes to the core of Israel's complicated self-image as a democracy and a Jewish nationalist homeland.

"I'm disgusted," said former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Angry calls flooded radio talk shows. Legislators and army officers protested. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin asked at a cabinet meeting whether the award could be withdrawn.

A three-member committee, appointed by the education minister, awards the Israel prize each year to a dozen recipients. Some past winners have been Arab poet Emile Habibi — another controversial choice — and conductor Zubin Mehta. The honour includes a \$7,500 prize.

Education Minister Shulamit Aloni, a leftist, told Mr. Rabin she could not interfere with the committee's choice.

Dr. Leibowitz emerged as a voice of dissent in 1967, when he warned that Israel's "triumphs" in the 1967 war would turn to ashes unless it quickly withdrew from the Arab territories it had just occupied.

"I wrote on the seventh day that this brilliant military victory will prove to be a historical and political disaster for the state of Israel," Dr. Leibowitz said recently.

Against the euphoria of the time, his was a voice in the wilderness and might have gone unnoticed if Dr. Leibowitz had not been one of Israel's finest and most eclectic minds.

Born in Latvia and educated in Germany, he is a professor of biochemistry and neurophysiology, an authority on Jewish philosophy and religion, and an editor of the Hebrew encyclopedia.

He also is an orthodox Jew who wears a black skullcap, prays daily in synagogue, and delights in his secular audiences by his contempt for Israel's religious establishment.

Dr. Leibowitz argues that the domination of two million Palestinians has corrupted Israel and given rise to a "Judeo-Nazi mentality in certain circles." The elderly professor was asked sarcastically on a talk show if he believed Israel would put Palestinians in concentration camps and kill them in gas chambers.

"It is known to me that the state of Israel is keeping thousands of Arabs in concentration camps," he replied, referring to camps for Palestinian prisoners.

Dr. Leibowitz says soldiers should refuse to serve in the occupied lands.

"Our problem is not to liberate the Palestinians; our problem is to liberate Israel from this curse," he said in an interview in his tiny, book-cramped study in West Jerusalem.

Dr. Leibowitz believes many share his views but "lack the courage to say clearly what they mean."

"I am their voice," he said, looking up from under bushy gray eyebrows, his frail body hunched forward. He said Mr. Rabin agrees with his call for territorial withdrawal "but lacks the courage" to campaign for it publicly.

Iraq and Bosnia highlight U.S.-France differences

By Terri Jones
The Associated Press

PARIS — As the jousting with Iraq escalated to bombing runs this month, France took part in the punishment while seeming to attack its American partner at the same time.

Its haughty reaction Sunday, after U.S. forces launched cruise missiles on a factory outside Baghdad, left diplomats scratching their heads. The same defence ministry that ordered French jets into action on previous days described Sunday's operation as "strictly American."

Washington was further startled this week when the senior government spokesman, Louis Mermaz, quoted Foreign Minister Roland Dumas as saying the Baghdad raids exceeded the mandate of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

The next day, the foreign ministry refused to confirm Mr. Dumas had made the statement.

Americans are not the only ones puzzled. Many in France feel their foreign policy is in disarray after the Iraq murkiness and flip-flops on Bosnia.

Last week, Mr. Dumas said France was prepared to liberate single-handedly detention camps run by Serbs in Bosnia. He backpedalled when alarm was expressed that France might act outside the authority of the United Nations.

"The foreign ministry has the irritating tendency recently of displaying pitiful weakness," editorialist Patrick Sabatier said Thursday in the newspaper Liberation.

The ministry "makes it appear, without daring to say it, that France is no longer on the same wavelength with its anti-coalition ally," Mr. Sabatier said. "One wonders whether this verbal inconsistency is a sign of thoughtlessness, or worse, incoherence."

"There is no coherence in the government's overtures," said Charles Pasqua, the conservative former interior minister. "Not when it is reduced to turning Kouchner into both the foreign and defence minister."

Health Minister Bernard Kouchner, an advocate of humanitarian intervention, recently helped negotiate a prisoner exchange in Bosnia.

The France-American friction harks back to the 1991 Gulf war, when in the heat of battle France's defence minister abruptly resigned, complaining about America.

U.S. officials in Paris say there are feelings in Washington that France is an unreliable ally, chafing at U.S. dominance of world affairs and itching to do something on its own.

There is resentment on both sides over acrimonious trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The Bush administration targeted with penalty tariffs late last year, and a trade war was barely averted.

U.S. officials say they are still puzzled over Mr. Dumas' outburst. France and the United States had been in almost seamless agreement on Iraq prior to his remarks.

One diplomatic source said Mr. Dumas could be feeling pressured over the March elections, which are expected to sweep in a conservative government and cost Mr. Dumas his job.

Paris and Washington have reconciled, however, over the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Western European Union, the fledgling military wing of the European Community.

Last summer the alliances practically tripped over each other rushing ships to enforce the arms embargo on Bosnia. Officials say there has been progress in recent months to coordinate their action.

On Thursday, the two agreed that in an emergency, a 35,000-member French-German army corps created in 1991 would be under NATO command.

The corps had been seen as a potential competitor to NATO. France belongs to the alliance but is not within its joint military command.

Israeli cabinet members favour compromise in expulsion crisis

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The majority of cabinet members in Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government want to make a compromise that will bring to an end the matter of the Palestinian evictions, Israel Television reported Friday.

Ten of the 18 ministers said in an anonymous poll that international pressure as well as stalled peace talks warranted a compromise that included the return of many of the over 400 alleged Muslim fundamentalist activists, the television said. Seven told Israel Television the decision should stand at any price and one refused to answer.

The television stressed that the results of the poll would not necessarily be mirrored in the cabinet, which holds open votes. But the poll showed the change of mind that has taken place since the cabinet's near unanimous decision Dec. 17 to expel the Palestinians.

Israel, meanwhile, is seeking to delay a U.N. Security Council debate on the issue until after Israel's supreme court has ruled on the issue, media reports said.

Also Friday, an Israeli daily quoted a government source as saying a defence ministry check found an additional 10 of the 415 Palestinians expelled last month to Lebanon were ousted by mistake.

In the poll by Israel Television's political affairs reporter, 10 of the 18 cabinet ministers said

they would agree to a compromise "which would involve...an early return of all or most of them."

Seven ministers said the government should stick to its original decision to expel the Palestinians for periods ranging from nine months to two years.

Almost all the ministers said the decision to expel them, approved by the cabinet with one abstention, was right at the time. Those who favoured a compromise said it was necessary in light of international developments resulting from the expulsion.

The U.N. Security Council, the European Community and the United Nations. Israel's chief ally, have criticised the expulsions, and urged Israel to take back the Palestinians.

The Security Council is expected to convene soon to decide on measures against Israel for its refusal to abide by Resolution 799, which demands Israel let the evictees return.

Three missions to Israel by special U.N. envoys have failed.

Arab pressure

Diplomats from five Arab countries have called at the State Department to try to bring pressure on Israel to allow the Palestinians to return.

The diplomats presented an Arab League statement to Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian demanding that Israel

permit their repatriation. "They discussed the deportation issue with a view toward resolving it in a constructive manner," the State Department said afterward Friday.

The Clinton administration would like the Arabs to defer any drive for U.N. sanctions against Israel until after the Israeli supreme court rules on the expulsion. The court is expected to rule early next week.

In addition, administration officials want to evaluate a report by a U.N. fact-finding mission that returned Friday from a visit with the evictees, who are camped in southern Lebanon.

Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria were represented in the meeting, held at their request. The department's brief statement said Mr. Djerejian told them the United States consults closely with the United Nations on the matter.

Meanwhile, Zalmay Shoval, Israel's ambassador to the United States, stressed in an interview the expulsion was temporary and the Palestinians had a right to appeal the order.

Mr. Djerejian, a former U.S. ambassador to Syria, is trying to get Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Palestinians and Israel to agree to resume negotiations on a Middle East settlement and self-rule for Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. He met with the Arab diplomats for about an hour.

10 killed in Erbil carbomb

BAGHDAD (R) — A carbomb exploded in the Kurdish-held Iraqi city of Erbil, killing at least 10 people and wounding many more, relief sources said Saturday.

"A big carbomb went off Friday and a number of people were killed and many more people were wounded," one source told Reuters.

The source, quoting relief workers in the area, said the death toll in the northern Iraqi city was at least 10.

In Ankara Friday, a Kurdish party official said eight people were killed and 120 wounded in the explosion.

"The bomb exploded in a cen-

tral and crowded area at 1310 local time. It also wrecked many nearby stores and cars," the official from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) told reporters.

Serchil Qazzaz, the PUK representative in Ankara, said the blast occurred at a shopping area around the ancient castle dominating the town.

Saeef Dizaye, another Iraqi Kurdish representative, said the explosion "set off by a time device attached to a car left unattended in the street for a while," had killed 11 and injured 132.

A U.S. officer, heading a Western military mission in the Kurdish town of Zakho near the

Turkish border, confirmed the blast, but gave a smaller toll figure. The officer, speaking of condition of anonymity, said five people were killed and 40 to 50 others were wounded.

It was not immediately possible to account for the differences in reported casualties.

The blast was the most deadly in a series of attacks since last summer.

Carbombs, grenade or rocket attacks mainly targeting the personnel and premises of the U.N. and other international relief agencies resulted in several U.N. guards were injured.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudi king invites Afghans to talks

DUBAI (R) — King Fahd, appealing for an end to the fighting in Kabul, has invited warring Afghan mujahedeen groups to meet in Saudi Arabia for talks on ways to settle their differences. "In the name of Islam, I urge you to lay down your arms and let reason, conscience and logic govern you," the king said in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency late Friday. "I address to you a sincere invitation to Saudi Arabia to meet...and discuss the your views and differences." The Saudi monarch, among the world's most influential Muslim leaders as the custodian of Islam's holiest shrines, issued his appeal against a backdrop of intensified fighting in Afghanistan. More than 100 people were wounded in Kabul alone on Thursday. Saudi Arabia was one of the major backers of the Mujahedeen groups during their 14-year war against the Soviet-installed government that was swept from power last April. In his announcement King Fahd reminded Mujahedeen groups of Saudi Arabia's former support, mostly in cash for military equipment. Saudi Arabia also gave tanks, artillery and rockets captured from Iraq during the Gulf war.

Kuwaiti elected head of U.N. food agency

ROME (AP) — A Kuwaiti banker who directed the rebuilding of his country after the Gulf war has been elected president of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the U.N. agency announced Friday. Fawzi Hamad Al Sultan, 48, was elected in a closed session of IFAD's governing council Thursday. IFAD, created in 1977, makes loans for projects to grow food and ease rural poverty in developing countries. Unlike other U.N. agencies, the Rome-based IFAD gets its money through periodic fund-raising drives rather than assessing its members. To be elected, a candidate must receive at least two-thirds of 1,800 votes. After two rounds of voting, Mr. Sultan had received 953 votes, while a candidate from Venezuela, Enrique Ter Horst, had 349. Mr. Ter Horst withdrew his candidacy, allowing Mr. Sultan to be elected by consensus, said IFAD spokeswoman Jacky Sutton. Mr. Sultan succeeds Idriss Jazairy of Algeria. Mr. Sultan was managing director of the Bank of Kuwait and the Middle East and director of research at the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. In the aftermath of the Gulf war, he led the Kuwait emergency and recovery programme, which oversaw the rebuilding of the emirate's economy.

Church group victim of 'Jewish soap' hoax

LANTANA, Florida (R) — A local church group dedicated to fighting anti-Semitism has been inundated with phone calls after a hoaxer ran a newspaper advertisement saying it was selling "bars of Jewish human soap." The Florida Christian Task Force, a little-known group which does not even have a listed telephone number, was deluged with phone calls last week after someone placed a small advertisement in the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel. "Bar of Jewish human soap. Real WWII relic, 50¢," the ad said. It listed the phone number of the church group. The Sun-Sentinel published a prominent page three apology, saying the ad had slipped through in error. It appeared in a section of free advertisements for bargains priced at \$50 or less. "The Sun-Sentinel inadvertently published an ethnically offensive classified ad in Wednesday's editions. The Sun-Sentinel apologizes and has taken appropriate action to ensure a mistake like this does not recur," it said. The church group said it received dozens of calls, most expressing horror or anger but a few inquiring about the soap. The church group Friday was not answering its phone. Callers heard a taped message explaining that it had been the victim of a hoax and that anti-Semitism is "the very thing we stand against."

European stand elates Greek Cypriots

NICOSIA (AP) — Greek Cypriots were elated and Turkish Cypriots angered Friday by a European Parliament resolution denouncing the Turkish occupation of north Cyprus. "Undoubtedly this is one of the finest resolutions we have had from this forum and a strong weapon for promoting a Cypriot settlement and entry to the European Community," said Andreas Mavromatis, the spokesman of the government-controlled by Greek Cypriots. Kenan Atakot, the foreign minister of the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state, said: "The European Parliament had no right or jurisdiction to adopt such a resolution. We shall not accept it." The breakaway state in the Turkish-occupied part of the island is recognised only by Turkey. The resolution adopted Thursday blamed the Turkish Cypriot side for the lack of progress in U.N.-sponsored negotiations for the reunification of the island in a two-zone federation. The European Parliament resolution "reaffirms its conviction that the continuation of the status quo in Cyprus is unacceptable and poses wider threats to the region." It also "calls upon the government of Turkey to withdraw its occupation troops from the Republic of Cyprus in accordance with the relevant U.N. resolutions."

Sri Lanka regrets strikes against Iraq

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka said Friday it deeply regretted civilian casualties in recent allied air strikes against Iraq. "Recent air attacks on Iraq have caused civilian casualties in Iraq which the government deeply regrets. The tragic loss of innocent lives must be averted," Foreign Minister Harold Herat told parliament. He said all unsettled issues should be pursued in terms of United Nations resolutions. "There should be no recourse to unilateral action which is not in keeping with the purpose and spirit of U.N. resolutions," Mr. Herat said. "Any escalation of the conflict in Iraq is likely to have grave repercussions, which would extend beyond the Gulf region and cause a threat to international peace and security."

Turkey seizes 72 kg of heroin

ANKARA (R) — Turkish gendarmes seized 72 kilograms of heroin Friday hidden in an abandoned car in the eastern town of Baskale, Anatolia news agency said. The agency said the heroin was sealed in 102 plastic bags. Security forces were looking for the car's owner. Turkey is on a major drug-trafficking route from Afghanistan to Western Europe through Pakistan and Iran.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 Reeves d'enfants
17:40 La Piste de Xapaton
19:00 New French
19:15 Le Journal de l'histoire
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:30 News in Arabic
20:30 Who's the Boss
21:10 Documentary
21:30 Science Workshop
22:00 News in English
22:30 Law and Order

PRAYER TIMES

06:00 Fajr
06:30 Sunrise (Doha)
11:07 Dhuhr
14:41 Asr
17:05 Maghreb
18:26 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetich Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 63275
St. Joseph Church Tel. 62490
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628243
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775201
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623824, 654932
Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be fair and winds will be light and variable, changing at times to southeasterly moderate. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman Min/Max temp. 2/14
Aqaba 6/21
Deraa 0/15
Jordan Valley 7/19

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ahmad Yousef 786384
Dr. Ahmad Khamis 747684
Dr. Mohammed Al-Nabulsi 693925
Dr. Khalid Mu'addi 743500
Firas pharmacy 661912
Perdows pharmacy 783336
Al Asma pharmacy 670555
Nadim's pharmacy 636762
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 637660
Najla pharmacy 847623
Fifth circle pharmacy 813141
Samir pharmacy 661898
Tahar pharmacy 621366
Yahia pharmacy 624225
Al Amir pharmacy 777112
Al Azzam pharmacy 888681
Hisham pharmacy 771957
JB8024
Dr. Abdo Abu Hisham 226764
Alqada pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:
Dr. Maizoon Haddadin 985750
Khalifa pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Helpline 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Steady State 715121
Highway Police 833402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 625800
Prison Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage
Complaints 891461
Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 681010
Electricity Authority 815015
Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalifa Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Al-Jalil Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jalal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmoussi 664171/4
Shmoussi Hospital 669151
University Hospital 843845
Al-Muhsin Hospital 667271/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhsin 77101/5
Al-Bashir, J. Adrafi 75111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/30
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Gov. Hospital (09)83323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ra Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hissa Modern Hospital (09)986890

BEIRUT:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272773
Ra Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (05)5200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:30 Amman (RJ)
09:00 Amman (RJ)
09:25 Amman (RJ)

09:45 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:15 Beirut (RJ)
10:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:45 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
10:55 London (RJ)
11:00 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
11:15 Athens (RJ)
11:30 Rome (RJ)
11:45 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:50 Beirut, Cairo (AG)
10:25 Cairo (MS)
11:15 Doha, Muscat (GS)
11:45 Moscow (SU)
11:55 Larnaca (CY)

MARKET PRICES

Upward price in Jds per kg:
Apples 700/700
Bananas 700/280
Bananas (Mekassar) 640/640
Cauliflower 650/420
Carrots 250/180
Cauliflower 210/160
Cauliflowers (large) 150/180
Cauliflowers (small) 300/220
Eggplants 250/220
Garlic 650/550
Cauliflower 210/160
Lemon 270/220
Orange 270/220
Marrow (large) 220/160
Marrow (small) 440/380
Mint 80
Onion (dry

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Queen Noor attends piano recital

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday patronised at the Royal Cultural Center a piano recital by Ammar Hachicho. The recital, organised by Noor Al Hussein Foundation's (NHF) National Music Conservatory (NMC), included pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Bartok, Tchaikovsky and Liszt. Mr. Hachicho was born in Germany to a Jordanian father and a Lebanese mother. A first prize winner of a number of German competitions for young musicians, Mr. Hachicho began performing in public at the age of 11, and had his first public recital as a piano soloist in 1983. All proceeds of Saturday's recital will go to support the Scholarship Fund of the Needy and Talented Outstanding Students of the Conservatory, which also draws for its financial resources on local private contributions. Ten per cent of the conservatory's needy students benefit from this fund each year. The event was sponsored by Lufthansa German Airlines in cooperation with Jira Rihani and Sons Co. In addition to Her Majesty, the recital was attended by the Minister of Information, members of the NHF Board of Trustees, the NHF president and members of the NMC's Steering Committee.

Cabinet plans international activities

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Saturday decided to send a delegation to Hungary Monday to hold talks on Jordanian-Hungarian civil aviation cooperation. The Civil Aviation Authority director will lead the Jordanian delegation on the three-day visit. The council also decided that Jordan take part in a tourist exhibition to open in Madrid on January 26. It said Jordan will be represented by the Ministry of Tourism and Royal Jordanian, as well as the private sector. Jordan will have its own pavilion at the week-long Madrid exhibition. The Cabinet delegated Mr. Ahmad Nawawi, director general of the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) to attend the 64th meeting of the Board of Directors of the Arab Satellite Communication Organisation to open in Dubai Feb. 13.

Envoy to Senegal presents credentials

DAKAR (Petra) — Jordan's ambassador to Morocco Adnan Al Talbouni Saturday presented his credentials as Jordan's non-resident ambassador in Dakar to Senegal's President Abdo Diouf. Mr. Talbouni conveyed to Mr. Diouf His Majesty King Hussein's greetings and wishes of further progress and prosperity to the people of Senegal. Mr. Diouf commended "the international reputation Jordan enjoys as a result of King Hussein's wise leadership." He said he was looking forward to visiting Jordan as soon as possible in response to an invitation extended to him by the King.

Jordan's ambassador meets Yemeni minister

SANAA (Petra) — Yemeni Education Minister Mohammad Al Ja'fari met Saturday with the Jordanian ambassador to Yemen to discuss the prospect of Jordan's sending new teachers to his country. The meeting also involved discussions on means of enhancing bilateral relations in educational fields.

1st batch of marine police to graduate

AMMAN (Petra) — The first batch of marine police will graduate in Aqaba Monday, in a ceremony to be attended by Public Security Department (PSD) Director Major-General Fadel Ali Fuhaid. PSD sources said this group will form the nucleus of the marine police force which will join the rest of the PSD forces in maintaining national security. The main task of the force will be maintaining security in Aqaba and combating drug trafficking in the port city, the sources said.

JVFA recommends interest exemption

AMMAN (Petra) — The Board of Directors of the Jordan Valley Farmers Association (JVFA), held a meeting Saturday and discussed a primary report by the federation's secretary general on the effects of the frost wave which swept the Jordan Valley Jan. 17-18. The board recommended that the government exempt farmers from interest on loans granted in 1992 and 1993, and urged the government to extend new interest-free loans to farmers whose crops were damaged by frost. It also called for establishing an agricultural fund, whose revenues will be used in building dams and planting trees.

NAF gives Tafleeh JD 330,156

TAFILEH (Petra) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) extended JD 330,156 in assistance to 1,084 families in Tafleeh in 1992, NAF Tafleeh Director Zeid Ma'abreh said Saturday. Mr. Ma'abreh said JD 36,300 was extended to 26 cases to help them start their own income-generating projects, and JD 2,693 were offered to 10 cases to help them buy hearing aids, glasses and wheel chairs. He said by the end of 1992 the fund had established 127 projects at a total cost of JD 173,700.

Geography experts discuss map-making

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian-Tunisian technical committee met Saturday at the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre in Amman. The committee discussed joint production of maps and serial photography programmes. It also discussed scopes of bilateral cooperation and activating the role of the Jordanian-Tunisian Coordination Bureau which was set up by the committee. The committee's meetings will last for four days.

Jordanian-cyclist to begin stage 5

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian traveller and cyclist Ali Al 'Utum has recently ended the fourth stage of his world tour, started at the end of 1990. The fourth stage which began Dec. 5 included Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. In the earlier stages, Mr. Utum visited Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. He told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the fifth stage of the tour will include the United States, Mexico and Canada. He said the objective of the tour is to highlight the cultural image of Jordan abroad and to familiarise himself with the life of people in other countries.

Ministry urges quality

AMMAN (Petra) — A training seminar on quality control in the industrial sector opened Saturday at the Philadelphia Hotel in Amman.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Industry and Trade Marwan Awad delivered an opening address stressing the importance of the industrial sector in the economic development process.

Mr. Awad said other economic sectors, which are reliant on the industrial and services sectors, lack the infrastructure needed for their development.

The industrial sector, he said, constitutes 25 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), which underlines the need to pay due attention to this sector.

This can be done by replacing imported commodities with locally-manufactured ones and encouraging Jordanian industrialists to export their commodities, Mr. Awad said.

To achieve these two goals the industrial sector should focus on quality products at reasonable prices, the secretary general said.

Mr. Awad said the Ministry of Industry and Trade is concerned with the quality of products, which prompted it to establish the Specifications and Standards Department.

He added that the ministry is planning to establish an independent directorate to look into such matters.

Director of the Specifications of Standards Department Hassan Al Saoudi delivered an address in which he said that holding the seminar was part of the activities of the Jordanian-German project for developing specifications and standards in Jordan.

Mr. Saoudi expressed hope that other courses and seminars on quality control will be held in the future.

He said the national industry has achieved progress over the past years in terms of quality and quantity. It has also managed to be competitive in the local market as well as abroad, he said.

Assiras Qassar, Deputy Director of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) office in Amman, which is organising the course in cooperation with the specifications department, focused on the importance of quality control in her address.

She said the European Community Market sets certain specifications for any commodity imported from abroad.

Ms. Qassar said the significance of holding training courses in the field of industrial quality has a pivotal role in marketing commodities locally or abroad.

Participating in the six-day seminar are 30 engineers who will discuss the basic principles of quality control, statistical techniques, ways of selecting samples and other related issues.

New rules for drivers

AMMAN (Petra) — The Drivers and Vehicles Licensing Department Saturday issued a statement giving conditions for non-Jordanians residing in the Kingdom and wishing to obtain a driving licence.

Non-Jordanians can obtain such a licence provided they have a valid residence permit, a foreign driving licence or any accredited certificate from driver training school, a valid work permit, and a good conduct certificate if exempted from the residence permit, said the statement.

Any non-Jordanian investor must register his project with the concerned authorities but no work permit is needed, the statement said. This also applies to the investor's wife, it said.

The same applies to diplomatic mission provided they produce official documents from the Foreign Ministry.

Foreign experts and technicians employed by public organisations in Jordan are also exempted from the work permit condition, the statement said.

Non-Jordanian students at the universities can produce the university identity card when applying for a driving licence.

Exhibit focuses on Dana

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Tourism Yanal Hikmat and French Ambassador to Jordan Denis Bouchard Sunday will open an exhibition of photographs and drawings by French artist Michele Bievers depicting Dana in southern Jordan.

On display at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) in Amman, the exhibition will run until the end of January.

Dr. Bievers has conducted research on Dana, which was established several centuries ago and claims a number of archaeological sites.

The village has 150 citizens who live on raising sheep and farming.

Nearby the village, is the Wildlife Reserve of Dana founded by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN).

Located in a scenic area of the Rift Valley, the reserve covers 100 square kilometres, and is one of the few areas of Jordan where a viable population of larger mammals, including the mountain gazelle, ibex and striped hyena, survive, according to the RSCN.

The RSCN is currently implementing a restoration programme at the archaeological sites of Dana, with other Jordanian organisations and Ministries in an effort to help local residents ensure an adequate income, particularly through services to tourists to the region.

Dr. Bievers has published 70 page book on her studies of the region in Arabic and French. The illustrated book will be introduced at the exhibition.

Jordan mourns Suleiman Al Hadidi

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

SALT — One of Jordan's most prominent lawyers and a former Minister, Suleiman Al Hadidi, was laid to rest in his hometown of Salt Saturday.

Mr. Hadidi, who died Friday, of a heart attack was born in Salt in 1923. A 1944 graduate of law from Damascus University, he served in a number of government positions and held the cabinet post of minister of interior several times.

Mr. Hadidi also served as president of the Jordanian Bar Association and held the post of assistant secretary general of the Arab Lawyers Federation.

His Majesty King Hussein delegated Balqa Governor Eid Al Qatameh to attend the funeral and to offer his condolences to the Hadidi family and clan.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Delegated the director of the Balqa Police Department to convey his condolences to the Hadidi family.

Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, Speaker of the Palestine National Council Sheikh Abdul Hamid Al Sayeh and notable Jordanian personalities, together with heads of political groups and private and public organisations



Suleiman Al Hadidi in the Kingdom attended the funeral in Salt.

The secretary general of the Arab Lawyers Federation Farouk Abu Issa will arrive in Amman from Damascus Sunday, accompanied by two members of the federation's general secretariat to offer condolences to the Hadidi family.

Mr. Hadidi's death was announced Saturday in a communique from the Prime Minister's office.

JNYF to stage rally for Iraqis

AMMAN (J.T.) — A public march and rally will be staged Sunday afternoon by the Jordanian National Youth Federation (JNYF) in a show of solidarity with the Iraqi people.

The march which will begin from Abdali and end at Hashemieh Square near the old municipality building and the Roman amphitheatre.

A nation-wide campaign will be announced to collect supplies such as pencils and copybooks for Iraqi children. Meanwhile, organisations in Jordan continued to voice condemnation of the recent U.S.-led attacks on Iraq. The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) issued a statement recently, denouncing such attacks and appealing to churches in the Middle East to support efforts towards the achievements of peace and justice.

Gaza children to receive speech, hearing treatment

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In Gaza, 1,000 pre-school children have been identified as potentially needing special speech and hearing services.

According to Manal Hamzah, audiology consultant for the Society for the Care of the Handicapped in Gaza (SCHG), 4,000 children between the ages of 1 day and 6 years are being treated at home under the Portage programme for the development of motor skills and general abilities.

Ms. Hamzah expects that out of the 4,000 children, 300 will need intensive diagnosis, rehabilitation, audiology and special education services.

She attributes the high number of cases to poor primary health care services received by pregnant women in Gaza.

With a population of 800,000, birthrate of 4.1, and households of seven or more children, Gaza has been described by Arab-American scholar Edward Said as "an affront to humanity."

Gaza, which has been under Israeli occupation since 1967, has more than its share of health problems.

Houses are cold and damp, which can lead to problems of the middle ear and later to hearing disabilities. School classes are overcrowded and provide little or no visual or mental stimulation. "A child does not go to school



Gaza's overcrowded schools can lead to speech and hearing impairments (UNRWA photo)

until the age of six. So if the child has some handicap, it will be left undetected until the late age of six," Ms. Hamzah said.

Plans for home treatment services have been drawn up in cooperation with the University of Lamar in Texas, and will start in May 1993.

Children will be equipped with hearing aids and other devices, and their parents will be trained in dealing with speech and hearing impairments.

The society will assign a trained

teacher for every ten children; he/she will visit the children at their homes on a weekly basis.

Meanwhile, about 70 students from Gaza will benefit from the University of Lamar off-campus master's level training programme in audiology, speech pathology, and deaf education.

Funding for the programme has been provided by the U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID). The cost of the programme is estimated at \$10 million.

UNCTAD, ESCWA open transport meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) opened a two-day meeting in Amman Saturday on multimodal transport in Western Asia.

Senior officials from governmental road transport corporations, port authorities and state-owned airlines are participating in the meeting which is being held at the ESCWA office. ESCWA executive Director Tayseer Abdel Jaber told the opening session that the transport sector constituted one of the main pillars of socio-economic development, and plays a key role in the development of other sectors.

ILO checks needs in occupied territories

AMMAN (Petra) — The International Labour Organisation (ILO) plans to offer assistance to workers and businesses in the occupied Arab territories following a visit there shortly by an ILO team, to determine aid requirements of Palestinians under Israeli rule.

The announcement was made by ILO Assistant Director Mr. Shukri Dajani for Arab Affairs who is leading an ILO fact-finding mission the Middle East.

At a meeting with acting Minister of Labour Saad Al Srouar in Amman Saturday, Mr. Dajani said the ILO director has requested more aid for Arab workers under Israeli occupation, pending a review of the workers' needs.

The acting minister spoke at length about the pitiful conditions of Arab workers in the occupied territories.

Outlining the Israeli authorities arbitrary measures, the minister said the magnetic card system issued to Arab workers restricts their movement.

The long curfews imposed on refugee camps and towns, bans on marketing Arab farmers produce and other measures are causing a great deal of suffering to the local population, the minister said.

He added that heavy taxes including the departure tax, are increasing the burdens on Arab businesses and workers at a time when the occupied territories are witnessing increased unemployment.

Mr. Srouar urged the ILO to work out a timetable for the implementation of its own resolutions passed in 1974 and 1980 and to provide all possible economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people.

Embassy Of India Amman Republic Day of India

On the occasion of the Republic Day of India, a flag hoisting ceremony will be held on Tuesday, January 26, 1993, at 10 a.m. at the premises of the Embassy of India, First Circle, Jabal Amman (Opp. Malhas Hospital). All Indians with their family members are cordially invited to attend the function.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition entitled "Latin American Countries in France" at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Modernist Still Life Photographed" at the American Centre.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Dhans, a Village from South Jordan" displaying photos and other items on the village at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Israelis bomb Lebanese villages

(Continued from page 1)

its Friday editions.

"The kidnapping of foreign nationals and hijacking of aircraft are something of the past," Mr. Hariri told the newspaper, in a reference to incidents of lawlessness which had plagued his country.

Mr. Hariri said he hoped the new U.S. administration of President Bill Clinton would lift a seven-year-old ban on the travel of U.S. citizens to Lebanon and on flights to New York by Lebanon's national airline.

"These American measures are

hurting Lebanon as our country embarks on an era of peace and reconstruction," he said.

Mr. Hariri said Lebanon was ready to conclude a peace treaty with Israel, but made a treaty conditional on similar pacts reached by other Arab countries involved in the Middle East peace talks.

"We and our Arab colleagues entered the peace talks together, and whatever decision that needs to be taken on the matter we will take together," Mr. Hariri told the newspaper.

17 expellees flown to Haifa

(Continued from page 1)

clothes from the Red Cross," Dr. Rantisi said after meeting with the ICRC officials immediately after their arrival.

"We will remain demanding the immediate implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799," he said.

Resolution 799 condemns Israel for expelling the Palestinians and demands it take them back immediately.

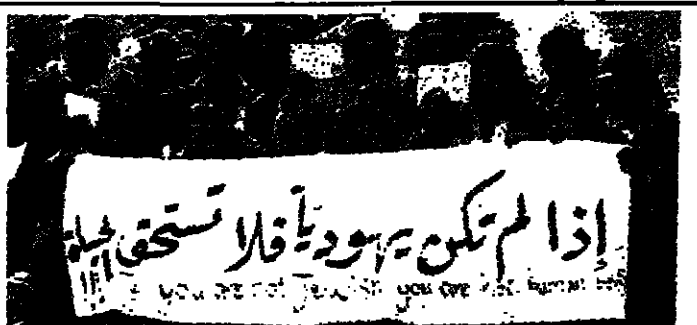
Most countries have condemned the expulsions and Palestinian resume the talks until the evictees come home.

Israel says the men were linked to two fundamentalist Islamic groups behind attacks on its soldiers.

"Although we harbour the highest esteem and respect for the Red Cross, we have refused to admit the delegation into the camp," said Dr. Rantisi.

"We smell a conspiracy to transform our cause into a humanitarian issue to abort Resolution 799," he added.

Dr. Rantisi said the ICRC de-



Palestinian expellees hold a banner reading "If you are not Jewish you are not human being" Friday during a march they staged to a Lebanese army line to present petitions to the world community to pressure Israel into allowing their return to their homes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

legation carried letters from the families to the evictees, "which we have received but do not intend to answer. We also refused to accept the medical supplies."

Despite the delegates' exclusion from the camp, formalities proceeded smoothly.

Dr. Rantisi called the names of the sick through a bullhorn, asking them to report to one of the roadside centres to be examined by Red Cross physician Cordula Wolfberg. The sick men were driven to the site in news reporters' cars.

The mistakenly expelled men


walked to the other centre for interviews with the delegates.

When the time came for them to leave, the 17 men hugged their friends and took letters back home for their families.

In their excitement, they shoved each other to get on the helicopters.

"Don't push each other, be calm," shouted Dr. Rantisi through a bullhorn.

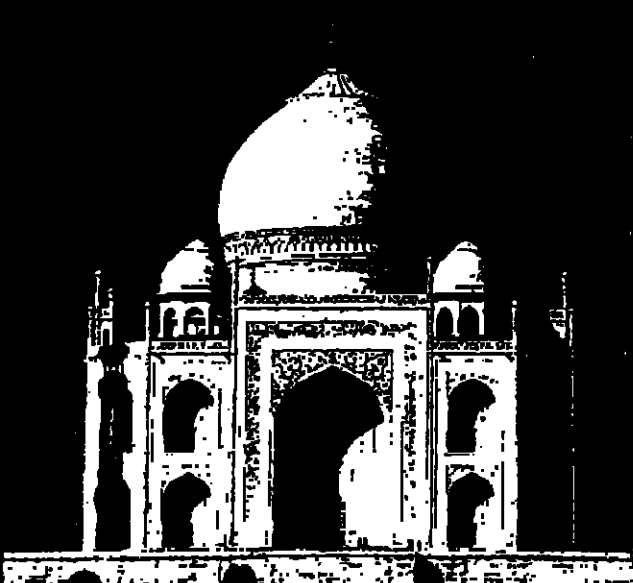
The six-hour visit was the first to freeing camp by the international organisation for two weeks.



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Doing it right

THE PALESTINIANS seem poised to forego the next round of peace talks with Israel on account of Israel's continued defiance of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799 which calls on Israel to reverse its expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians. This is an understandable position in view of the gravity of the situation surrounding the helpless Palestinians stranded in no-man's land for more than five weeks now. Yet abandoning the bilateral peace talks at this stage may not be the answer, neither for the plight of the affected Palestinian individuals nor for the Palestinian conflict itself. Given the fact that Arab and international geopolitical considerations have effectively deprived the Palestinians in particular of any military options to resolve their case, it would seem self-defeating from the Palestinian point of view to withdraw from the only available avenue left to them to retrieve at least some of their national rights. To pin exaggerated hopes only on escalating the intifada as a way to drive Israel out of the occupied Arab territories is wrong. The entire Arab World, it must be remembered, has opted for a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict including the Palestinian question out of bitter experiences with past military efforts to realise a total Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. So to abandon the peace process now, when there is also near universal support for it, would be self-defeating. It is one thing to press hard for the repatriation of the expelled Palestinians by all available means, but to put on hold the entire peace effort may not achieve the desired results including the return of the Palestinians. It so happens that the Arab side has engaged in the peace process more seriously than Israel has done. To suspend the negotiations at this juncture would therefore play into the hands of the extremists in Israel who would want nothing more than the miscarriage of the peace efforts under international pressure.

This does not of course mean that the issue of the expellees will have to be abandoned or forgotten before the talks are resumed in Washington or anywhere else. It simply means that every effort should be made to solve it right away.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Saturday drew attention to a request submitted by Israel to the Clinton administration asking that it use its influence to postpone a Security Council debate on the question of the Palestinian evacuees until the Israeli Supreme Court has reached a decision on the matter. This development clearly reflects Israel's deep desire to freeze Resolution 799 and prevent the council from forcing it to return the Palestinians to their homeland, said the paper. It is worthy to note here that Israel must implement the resolution regardless of the decision taken by its own supreme court simply because it was ordered to do so by the world international rules, the paper said. The Clinton administration is therefore called on to ignore this request and is urged to take speedy measures to implement the council resolution because any delay in the matter would encourage the Israelis to continue their atrocities against the Palestinians and violate world rules and regulations, the paper added. It said that Washington is invited to utilise its influence with Tel Aviv to respond favourably to the Security Council resolution and return the evacuees who have suffered a great deal due to Israel's arrogance and inhuman practices. Israel's continued flouting of U.N. resolutions and its mutiny against international rules, said the paper, can only place the new administration face to face with a critical test. The paper said no one expects the Clinton administration to individually force Israel to comply with U.N. resolutions, but at least one expects Washington not to impede the council from taking measures to force the Jewish state to abide by world resolutions.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dostour daily Saturday discussed President Clinton's speech in which he made it clear that Washington was now turning its attention to stem the power of Islamic fundamentalism now that the world has disposed of communism. Saleh Al Qallab said that Mr. Clinton, who is a Democrat, is bound to turn his attention to Iran, which conspired to bring about the downfall of former Democrat President Jimmy Carter and to launch aggression on that country. The best ally for the United States in this concern, said the writer, is Israel which is seeking continued western support for its policies and atrocities against the Arabs and the Palestinians. He said that it was in order to achieve Washington's ends that Israel recently deported 400 Hamas activists to southern Lebanon hoping to win the western nations' backing for its endeavour to perpetuate its occupation of Palestine. But the Rabin government, faced with an unexpected anger from western countries over this matter, is now trying to back down and reach a compromise over this issue, the writer said. However, he said, the Israelis are still in the game of stemming the so-called danger of Islamic fundamentalism and could launch a raid on Iranian nuclear plants, as it did in Iraq, to please the West and win further U.S. support.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Higher cash reserve required

Changing the rate of cash reserves which the banks are required to maintain with the central bank is one of the established instruments of monetary policy. In the case of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) this instrument is the most effective and potent tool available to the central bank. Changing the discount rate is meaningless when banks are too liquid to need to borrow from the central bank, while open market operations, on the other hand, are almost non-existent in Jordan in the absence of a big and active secondary market of financial instruments.

The central bank is authorised, by law, to dictate the rate of cash reserves, i.e., the portion of deposits that must be set aside with the central bank, without interest, provided this portion does not exceed 35 per cent.

The CBJ lowered the ratio of compulsory cash reserves in the past years when banks were starving for liquidity. The liquidity of the banks soared now to unprecedented high levels. Banks maintain huge cash balances with the central bank in excess of the compulsory reserves, therefore the central bank found it necessary to raise the ratio from 13 per cent to 15 per cent in order to siphon part of the excess liquidity and as precaution against possible inflationary pressures. At this time, when the Jordanian economy is close to being overheated, the precautions against renewed inflation are justified. Under the circumstances, the

central bank must adopt a tighter monetary policy, which it did. Naturally, the CBJ's action drew some sharp criticism from the banking sector, which the press echoed. This criticism is of course worth examining.

At the outset, we claim that the private sector and the business circles will not be negatively affected by the new measure. The remaining liquidity in the banking system, after raising the required cash reserves, is still more than sufficient to accommodate comfortably all the legitimate demand of the business sector at the current interest rate on credit. Investors still find it in their best interest to use their own capital, rather than to borrow from the banking system at 11 per cent per annum, especially if their capital is kept in dollars, either within the country or abroad.

It is worth mentioning here that the compulsory cash reserve ratio on deposits of foreign exchange was 35 per cent for four years. However, the central bank accepted to pay the going interest rate on the reserve in foreign exchange while no interest is payable on the 15 per cent reserve in local currency.

The margin of interest, i.e., the difference of interest, of 5.5 per cent, payable to depositors and the interest chargeable to borrowers of 11 per cent, is relatively wide. It secures high profitability in favour of the banks. The central bank measure will

effectively absorb part of this windfall in favour of the treasury, to which the central bank pays its own profits. It remains to be seen whether the banks will be able to shift this indirect tax to the public or if it will be borne by the banks themselves. We are inclined to expect the latter, because interest rates on deposits and loans were independently determined by the market.

A compulsory cash reserve of 15 per cent has the effect of raising the cost of deposits from 5.5 per cent payable to the depositors to 6.5 per cent, because the bank pays interest on the entire deposit while it is unable to invest more than 85 per cent of the funds under the best circumstances.

During 1992, the central bank imposed a ceiling on the growth of credit of 8.5 per cent. At the time, critics argued that the ceiling will suppress new investments. With 1992 ended, we find that despite the economic boom, the private sector did not utilise more than 65 per cent of the allowed quota.

The ceiling of credit for 1993 will be JD400 million. We believe that that ceiling is actually higher than the real needs for credit. The credit ceiling, like the hiking of cash reserve ratio, will not prevent qualified borrowers from obtaining sufficient credit, but they will send a signal to the market that inflation is not to be expected.

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

Is Gaza worth the anguish?

By David Hoffman

KHAN YOUNIS — Occupied Gaza Strip — Israeli army jeeps with loudspeakers roared through the rutted streets in the occupied Gaza Strip, announcing that the curfew would be lifted for just two hours, but only women could leave their houses to shop for food.

Tharwar Abu Tyour, an unemployed car mechanic, sent one of his daughters, Rana, out to get fresh milk from a farmer, he and his neighbours said. He gave her 1 shekel and a pitcher.

The 10-year-old girl walked through an orange grove and up a side street. When she started to cross a boulevard, she was shot and killed by two bullets fired by Israeli soldiers, witnesses recounted. According to a hospital report, the shots ripped through her back.

Rizeq Fara, 19, looked out from his house and saw that the girl had been hit. He shouted to neighbours to get her family, witnesses said. Soon, Rizeq, too, was shot and killed on his balcony by an Israeli soldier, the witnesses said. The hospital report said the bullet hit him in the head.

The deaths came in a maelstrom of anger, fear, and fatal miscalculations that erupted in Khan Younis Saturday, Dec. 19. Four other Palestinians were killed that day and four more died during the next three days in a surge of violence following Israel's mass deportation of 415 suspected Islamic activists to Lebanon.

The story of the Khan Younis deaths runs deeper than just another clash between Palestinians and the Israeli army. A reconstruction of the events, based on Palestinian witnesses and Israeli soldiers, offers a revealing glimpse of how quickly the violence was ignited and resulted in the killings and lasting bitterness.

The Khan Younis riot also underscores how, after five years of fighting the Palestinian intifada, or uprising, against Israeli occupation, the army is still caught in the grips of a painful no-win war. With each death — and particularly after the recent fatal ambush of three Israeli soldiers — influential voices in Israel are asking whether the occupation of the Gaza Strip is worth the anguish.

For Palestinians, too, December was a cruel month. Of the 23 Palestinians killed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, eight were under 16 years old. It was the highest monthly death toll in the occupied territories in more than two years.

After watching year-end programmes on Israeli television, Rana's father asked, "Why didn't they say, in 1992 there was a massacre in Khan Younis?" He said no one from the army has come to tell him that a mistake had been made.

"I was never in jail" and always kept out of Palestinian politics, he said. "But now, how can I

look at an Israeli after the death of my girl?"

Israeli soldiers, for their part, say they feel defenseless and in a no-win situation while on duty in Gaza. Without solving the deeper economic and social problems of Gaza, 40 soldiers warned in a recent letter to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, "there is a process of Lebanonisation — turning to the extreme and loss of control."

Especially in the southernmost towns and refugee camps like Khan Younis and Rafah, Gaza is daily transformed into a war zone, the place where Israeli soldiers' most fear to tread. Violent gangs named the Fateh Hawks and Red Eagles rule the streets there, and barefoot boys play with makeshift weapons and toy guns.

Many of the most jolting terrorist attacks against Israelis and most severe clashes with soldiers occur in Gaza or originate there. A large number of the suspected activists deported over a month ago came from Gaza, a windswept seaside strip that is home to 780,000 Palestinians, many of them refugees.

According to military officials, the nature of the conflict in Gaza has changed markedly in the last year. They say that the armed gangs have grown stronger, more experienced, and better equipped.

Israeli military commanders now see their role in Gaza not as confronting the mass demonstrations of the intifada's early days, but as grinding and dangerous combat against the relatively small number of armed fugitives.

Rana and Fara were not throwing stones or carrying guns, and the soldiers did not shout warn-

ings before firing the fatal shots, Palestinian witnesses said.

The army has said nothing publicly, but in an interview, an army officer acknowledged that Rana's death was a mistake. The officer, along with others in the army interviewed for this story, spoke on condition that he not be identified. He said the army lacked solid information about the death of Fara apparently because soldiers' recollections after the episode were inconclusive.

Palestinian witnesses said the soldiers in Khan Younis at that period fired large amounts of ammunition, sometimes at random. A soldier who was there described the atmosphere as "simple hysteria," and he said Rana was killed in a burst of more than 50 bullets.

When the Dec. 19 riot broke out, military commanders were surprised by the pent-up fury of the Palestinians at the deportations, army officials said. They were relying on a large deployment of reinforcements who had been sent to Gaza earlier in the month with little experience in the densely populated shantytowns. All the troops felt under siege from big, angry crowds throwing rocks, iron bars, and bottles, and some of them carrying weapons — the officials said.

The army was taken aback when hundreds of residents poured into the streets of Khan Younis — including men and children — when the curfew was briefly lifted for the first time in six days. "We saw that all the (refugee) camp and most of the population jumped out and filled up all the streets with all kinds of crowds and kids and boys," the

army officer said. "Most of the population was out and in part of the area there were armed guys who took part. ... All the population came out with their angry faces: ready to clash with the army. I was there. It was real different from other times."

Israeli army rules say soldiers may shoot if they feel their lives, or those of colleagues, are in immediate danger. Otherwise, they may shoot in the legs to wound a suspect while trying to apprehend him, but only after issuing a series of warnings.

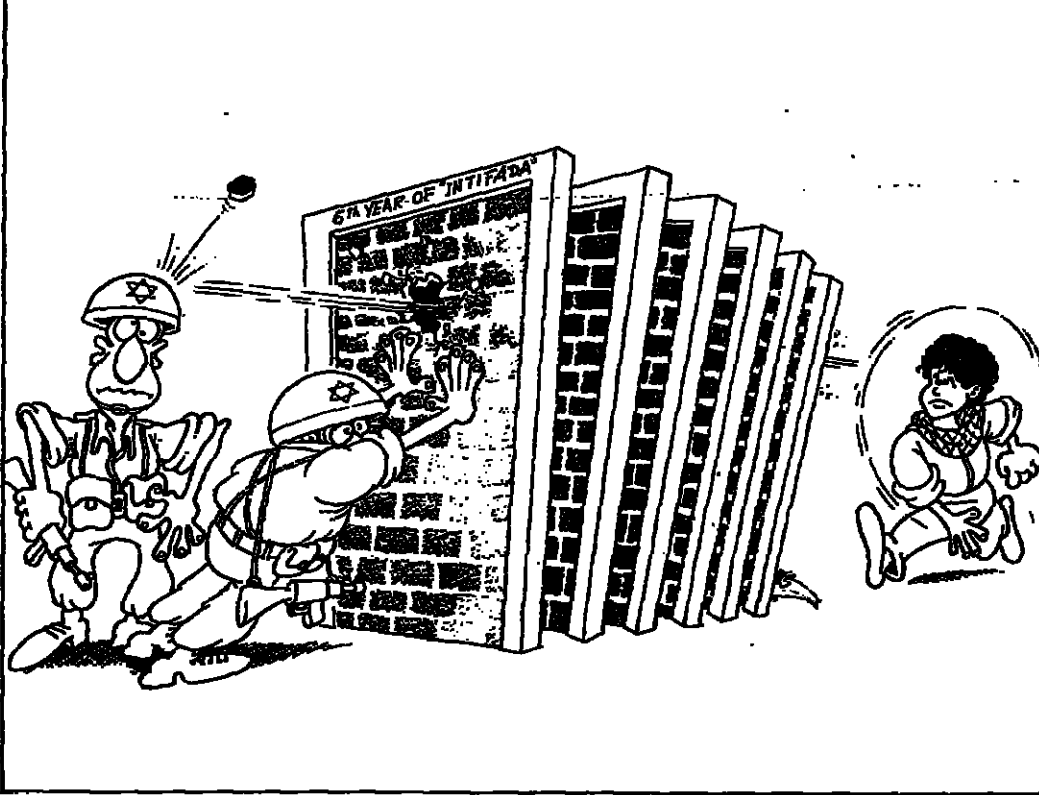
Rana was shot from a block away, according to two witnesses from the neighbourhood. They said they could not help her immediately because shooting continued. Eventually, she was taken to the hospital and pronounced dead on arrival.

A soldier who was in Khan Younis said he agreed with an unidentified soldier's description in the daily newspaper Haaretz of the situation as chaotic, and added: "In this specific incident, we shot 50 bullets, and I am only talking about the incident in which the girl was killed."

"I have no idea" how she was killed, he said. "I am going crazy from this. Simply crazy. We shot an enormous amount. I estimate that it was soldiers' hysteria — simple hysteria. I am sure that he did not shoot at the girl. He simply shot, and she got hit. The girl was not standing next to someone armed, or anything like that."

"No one can shake the feeling that she and others were killed because of us. Don't think that it is easy for us to live with this" — The Washington Post.

M. KAHIL



Isolated Shiites face increased dangers

By Charles Richards

THE SHITES in southern Iraq, whom Washington says are protected by the allied no-fly zone, are facing a worsening plight on several fronts. Increased repression by President Saddam Hussein's regime, the worsening economic situation, and a rift within the Iraqi National Congress (INC) umbrella organisation of opposition groups, have left the Shiites feeling more and more isolated.

Shiite dissidents based in London say that the allied no-fly zone has successfully reduced the military operations against the Shiites, but the Iraqi authorities have over the past two months begun a purge of dissident elements. They

have made selective arrests of people associated with the uprising in March and April 1991, noticeably in the towns of Najaf, Al Anbarah and Basra. And they have set up roadblocks and instituted other searches as the security apparatus consolidates its hold, according to Shiite dissidents.

As a result, "it is unlikely that the south will rise up against Saddam Hussein," said Laith Kubba, a leading Shiite intellectual. Others report a carrot and stick approach, with Baghdad offering gifts and bribes to loyal tribes.

At the same time, the population is suffering from lack of

food. Those in the marshes — a small minority of the Shiites in the south — do not even receive the government rations. There is unease among the Shiites that they did not get the kind of aid provided to the Kurds in the north under the Provide Comfort programme. Many feel the outside world in its obsession with military strikes and finding ways to unseat President Saddam does not care for their uprising and the broader humanitarian issues.

On a political level, the feeling of victimisation is one reason why the Shiites, with the exception of Sheikh Bahr Al Oluom, have in effect withdrawn from the Executive Council of the INC. Their

differences are both personal and substantial. Many in the Iraqi opposition, both outside the Iraqi National Congress, and inside, oppose the prominent role played by Ahmed Chalabi, the chairman of the executive committee. Criticism of Mr. Chalabi is mainly on a personal level, because of his past financial dealings, but it also contains differences in substance. One Sunni nationalist, Abdul Sitar Ed-Duri, resigned from the INC executive committee.

Laith Kubba's concerns are with policy more than personalities. "My deepest worry is the politicisation of the ethnic differences, of insisting on percentages

and quotas. Basically the INC went too far in seeking political federation for the Kurds, not administrative federation." That is, by insisting that the three-man presidency council should have one Kurd (Masoud Barzani), one Shiite (Sayyed Mohammad Bahr Al Oluom), one Sunni (General Hassan Naqib), the INC is reinforcing the sectarian differences of Iraqis rather than overcoming them. Not only Shiites claim to be active in promoting dissent in the south. Mr. Sabah Kadhim, a spokesman for General Naqib, said that his group, the independent Iraqi Alliance, had recruited army officers who had defected in

the south.

According to Mr. Kadhim, the United States is still targeting the south as the place where pressure would be brought to bear on President Saddam.

"Washington is working on a covert operation, sending people inside, and getting information specifically on army commanders. Their plan is to destroy military facilities in the south, in order to prevent the army from stopping the uprising," he said. Such an assertion of an uprising in progress is at odds with the more gloomy assessment by the Shiite groups — The Independent.

U.N. team reports Iraqi cooperation

(Continued from page 1)

Clinton to pursue aggressive actions against Iraq. Babel, published and owned by President Saddam's son, Uday, carried the open letter on page two.

It was the first time any Iraqi newspaper had directly commented on Mr. Clinton and Iraq's inauguration day ceasefire and offer of talks on the northern and southern and the two-and-a-half-year-old U.N. trade blockade.

"So far, there has been no response from the American side three days after Iraq's peaceful initiative. Therefore the gunpowder keg remains liable to explode any time," Mr. Aref wrote.

His remarks followed attacks by U.S. planes on Thursday and Friday on alleged anti-aircraft missile sites in the "no-fly" zone set up in the north.

"Was the assault a test by Washington to see how far Iraq was committed to its (ceasefire) decision? Undoubtedly, testing actions are not conducted by playing with fire," he wrote.

Mr. Aref said that if Mr. Clinton was seeking "to put his house in order he would not talk and behave like his predecessor (Bush) in the world and use the same terms against others."

Government newspapers have so far refrained from comment on Mr. Clinton's remarks that there would be no change in U.S. policy towards Iraq under his administration, but Mr. Aref said:

"Clinton is still, until this moment, against Iraq's right of sovereignty over its airspace and land, interprets Security Council resolutions away from reality and insists on keeping prohibited zones in the north and south of the country."

The army newspaper, Al Qadisiyah, in its own signed commentary, said Mr. Clinton's "contradictory policies" towards Iraq implied "the continuation of the same old path of U.S. foreign policy."

"Within this context Clinton will not escape the curse of the arrogant American presidency," columnist Hussein Al Obeidi wrote.

The United States and its Gulf allies launched missile and air strikes against Iraq Jan. 13, accusing Baghdad of flouting the Security Council's ceasefire resolution.

The attacks, spread over four days, killed at least 46 people, including two women who died when a cruise missile smashed the lobby of Baghdad's leading hotel, Al Rashid.

Iraq insists it is abiding by the U.N. resolutions but says they do not cover the "no-fly" zones.

After a U.S. F-16 shot down an Iraqi MiG in the south on Dec. 27 it moved surface-to-air missiles into the zone and vowed to fight to win back control of its airspace.

Just before Mr. Clinton moved into the White House Wednesday it offered talks to resolve the problem.

After the first attack Thursday, it said it stood by the ceasefire declaration. It described the reasons for Friday's attack as fabricated and made no mention of the ceasefire.

U.S. officials said that in both incidents Iraqi air defence radar locked onto U.S. or allied planes patrolling the northern "no-fly" zone.

Iraq says its air defence batteries have not switched on such radar since its ceasefire came into force Wednesday.

Iraqi military officers said they wanted peace.

"We have received orders not to open fire on any plane. We hope that the Americans can

understand and respond to this initiative," base commander Col. oneil Abed Ilah Danoun told reporters at the site of Thursday's air strike.

Planes too high to identify roared over a wheat field littered with craters and shrapnel from cluster bombs dropped on what Washington said was a missile battery site.

Col. Danoun said the nearest missile battery was 30 kilometres away from the bombed site of Bakheera, 12 kilometres south of Mosul, and their radars had not been activated.

The Iraqi officers, asked about Thursday's attack, said they had not locked their radar on any U.S. and allied planes patrolling the northern and southern "no-fly" zones since the ceasefire began Wednesday.

"The American pilots are our brothers — we don't think brothers should attack brothers," General Sameer Mohammad Nadhir, a MiG pilot, told reporters.

In Baghdad, the Foreign Ministry called the attack a provocation but made no mention of the ceasefire.

"Today's incident is nothing but a fabricated incident aimed at provocation," a statement said.

Denying suggestions that Friday's attack was triggered by an Iraqi missile battery locked on to a U.S. plane, it said Iraq had no air defence batteries east of Mosul.

Al Jumhuriyah, in a front-page editorial, blamed remnants of the Bush administration for the latest air strikes.

"There are elements of the remnants of the criminal Bush administration at the centre of responsibility in the American Defence Department and the Central Intelligence Agency," it said.

"They are working in an obvious manner to push the new American administration to take aggressive steps against Iraq."

Under the banner headline "beware of Bush's Remnants" Al Jumhuriyah said they were hiding facts about Iraq's attitude from Mr. Clinton.

Al Jumhuriyah also said Saturday that fear of Iraq would haunt Kuwait's ruling family ceaselessly until it abdicated or were overthrown after oil runs out.

The editorial in Al Jumhuriyah echoed a speech by President Saddam Monday in which he derided Kuwaiti rulers for imposing a "new colonialism" on the emirate.

Under the terms of the 1991 ceasefire, Iraq is required to give up its claim to Kuwait. But it has renewed it several times since and has made arms-gathering forays across the border.

"Regardless of its attempts to possess the constituent parts of a modern state and to buy off foreign news media, the Kuwaiti regime will remain smaller than a mosquito and dirtier than dirt itself in the eyes of Iraqis," the newspaper wrote.

"Fear of the Iraqis will continue to pursue their generation after generation until they throw themselves in the sea to get rid of it, or until our honorable brothers in our dear Kuwait stamp them underfoot," the newspaper said.

The editorial was titled "The Kuwaiti Regime and the Fear Complex."

It said that when Kuwait runs out of oil — not expected until the middle of next century, according to current estimates — the United States, Britain and France would "turn away from Kuwait's rulers, and the Kuwaiti regime will then appear as it really is."

American Muslim women educate community about Islam

By Rosalind Mandine Murphy

WASHINGTON — American Muslim women have joined together in a new organisation to help educate the American public about Islam and put an end to the stereotyping of Muslims in the United States.

The organisation, the North American Council for Muslim Women (NACMW), which was founded in February 1992, now has 280 members throughout North America and associate members in other countries.

According to its president, Sharifa Alkhateeb, Muslim women are often misrepresented in the western media. NACMW is "trying to turn that around" by contacting media, providing speakers for conferences and workshops, and establishing itself as a resource of information of Islam and Muslim women. Ms. Alkhateeb said.

Ms. Alkhateeb said that even though NACMW's membership is still growing, its reach is wide "because each one of our women is connected to at least four other organisations."

Ms. Alkhateeb has a master's degree in comparative religions and has worked as a journalist, a

teacher of English as a second language and as managing editor of a social science journal.

Explaining NACMW's goals, Ms. Alkhateeb said: "We are basically educated women who want to reexamine the way in which women are regarded; the way in which women are understood; and the possibilities that are available to women based on people's interpretation of the basic (Islamic) texts."

"We want to develop ideas that are based on the Koran and Hadith" and will allow a Muslim woman "to live a serious Muslim life anywhere in the world and still have all of her self-respect, her self-confidence, and her ability to manage her life," Ms. Alkhateeb stressed.

Working to end the stereotyping of Muslim women is an important way of attaining these goals, she said. Members of NACMW make themselves available for interviews, as speakers, and as resources for information to help set the record straight on Muslim women. Members of NACMW have also met with newspaper editors to "give them information, explain what our point of view is and ask them to be more sensitive," Ms.

Alkhateeb noted.

In July, Wanda Khan, publicity chairman for NACMW, organised a mass demonstration in response to an article published in the Charlotte Observer in North Carolina, entitled "Women of the Veil." NACMW viewed the article as "prejudicial," and Ms. Khan discussed these views in a television interview in Charlotte.

An issue of great importance to American Muslim women is the acceptance of women who wish to cover their heads in the workplace, Ms. Alkhateeb said. While most women who cover are accepted, there are still problems, she said.

"Those who choose to cover their hair, very often are discriminated against in the workplace," Ms. Alkhateeb said, citing several cases in which Muslim women have been fired from their jobs "because of their covering."

"We are trying to seek acceptance of us as human beings no matter how we choose to dress," Ms. Alkhateeb said. She noted that NACMW is hoping to meet with Hillary Clinton on this and other issues of concern. "We would like to make her aware of

some of the issues affecting Muslim women," Ms. Alkhateeb said.

Dealing with social service agencies presents another challenge to many immigrant Muslim women, about half of Muslim women are immigrants, Ms. Alkhateeb said. These agencies do not have Muslims or people from Middle Eastern backgrounds on their staffs, and this presents a problem not only in communication but also in establishing trust, she explained.

Through seminars and workshops, NACMW is working to get more people who are of Middle Eastern background or Muslims hired at these agencies and to train social service employees "to be more knowledgeable about people from the Middle East and about Islam," Ms. Alkhateeb pointed out.

In addition, NACMW is producing a series of pamphlets on health-care, sickness and healing, interpersonal relations and "body language." By outlining effective ways to serve Muslim immigrants, the pamphlets are "not only helpful to Muslims, but also to social service agencies," Ms. Alkhateeb said.

NACMW members also work

to educate Americans about Muslim women by getting involved in their communities, attending conferences, and reaching out to scholars and other organisations.

"We very much encourage our members to be involved in their local school systems, on committees, offering their services as volunteers. Just by being involved... will dispel a lot of myths," Ms. Alkhateeb said.

NACMW reaches out to professors who teach courses on women "so that they will be aware of a different way of thinking about Islam and Muslim women and their role," Ms. Alkhateeb said. Noting the growing success of these efforts, she said, "People are beginning to ask us to be involved and ask our opinions about things. Every now and then we will get a call from a university, checking information to see whether or not it is accurate."

NACMW members also establish contacts by attending women's and Muslim conferences and events throughout North America. "We give people copies of (NACMW) newsletters, we talk to them about our ideas and our organisation. If we know a major conference is going on we

send people there and, if possible, we try to become one of the panelists," Ms. Alkhateeb said.

NACMW members have attended and spoken at many recent conferences, including the Islamic Coordinating Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana; the first Annual Muslim Women's conference in Richmond, Virginia; Roots Palestinian Youth Organisation Second Annual Convention in Washington, D.C.; the Dialogue on Diversity at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies; and the New England Muslim Sister Association in Hartford, Connecticut. NACMW held its first conference last March at George Mason University in Virginia and plans a general conference for February to be held in Oakland, California.

Another important element to NACMW's work is "reaching out to men as well and trying to involve them in the process of thinking through with us a new outlook for women," Ms. Alkhateeb said. "If we want to have any kind of successful rethinking of what women can or cannot do — it has to be a joint effort," she stressed — United States Information Agency.

Saucy scoops fail to cure weak circulation

By Michael Leapman

THE PRESS is supposed to be a mirror of society, so it is appropriate that the national newspapers should, like nearly everyone else, have had a rotten year and be looking forward to a worse one. Even the voluminous chronicling of disasters in other quarters — the royal family, the government, the Balkans — has failed to halt the long-term decline in newspaper sales.

The unrestrained tabloid coverage of the first two of those subjects has made it almost certain that there will be powerful pressure this year for legislation to curb perceived excesses. And the recession has meant an ever-deeper slump in advertising revenue.

The most recent figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulations, covering the six months to Nov. 30, tell a depressing tale, particularly for the mass-circulation tabloids: Between them, the Sun, Star and Daily Mirror (with the Glasgow Daily Record), were down by 274,661 copies a day, compared with the same period a year earlier — a drop of 3.4 per cent.

On Sundays, the mass-market picture is even bleaker. The News of the World, Sunday Mirror and People dropped by 430,657 copies between them, a 4.3 per cent fall.

When critics accuse the press of dabbling in sensationalism to increase sales, they might reflect that this aim, whether defensible or not, is not always realised. A particularly saucy scoop, such as the Daily Mirror's discovery of taped conversations between the Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker-Bowles, may result in increased sales for a day or two, but unless the higher circulation is sustained — and it seldom is — it does not translate into extra advertising revenue.

The papers facing the greatest and most painful changes are those of the Mirror Group, still in the hands of the official receiver after Robert Maxwell's death more than a year ago. Since David Montgomery, former editor of the News of the World and Today, was appointed chief executive, there have been many changes, including the loss of scores of casual jobs.

Two of the group's three papers already have new editors. Richard Stott was never likely to stay long at the Daily Mirror after trying to lead his own management buyout. It is too early to tell whether his successor, David Banks, will be able to grab Sun readers by an apparent strategy of moving the paper marginally down-market.

Bill Hagerty's departure from

the People can be put down to its year-on-year circulation fall of 7.2 per cent, the worst performance of any national paper except the desperate Sunday Sport. It was, though, surprising that he should "succeed by Bridget Rowe, whose tenure at the Sunday Mirror was marked by a year-on-year fall of 4.3 per cent.

In contrast, the middle-market tabloids have had a good year. There have been strong performances from the Daily Mail, up 3.2 per cent, and, in particular, Today, up 15.4 per cent, although still by far the weakest tabloid with a circulation of 539,284.

The Mail on Sunday also did well, but not as well as its chief rival. The Sunday Express, which switched in July from broadsheet to tabloid under its new editor, Eve Pollard, has cut the Mail on Sunday's lead to 218,845. The Mail on Sunday enjoyed an exceptionally strong November, however, increasing its weekly circulation by 73,962 in a month when the Sunday Express's circulation fell by 25,261.

The year has been mixed for the broadsheet papers: They have done well on Sundays but poorly during the week. The total market for quality dailies has contracted by 29,329 year on year, or 1.16 per cent. The Daily Telegraph and the Times fared worse,

down 2 per cent and 1.8 per cent respectively, although the Telegraph remains a long way ahead of its three rivals, with sales of 1,038,792.

The Guardian's introduction of a tabloid second section every day, and a revamped Weekend section on Saturdays, has been well received, defending the paper's circulation from the erosion affecting all its rivals except the Financial Times. At the Independent, work on the daily paper's first significant redesign since its launch in 1986 is at an advanced stage.

The Times's circulation has not responded to changes made by its new editor, Peter Stothard. A plan to relaunch the Saturday Review on glossy paper with a content less like a Sunday supplement and more like the Independent's Saturday magazine has been postponed.

On Sundays the broadsheet picture is rosier, with a net increase of 57,080 copies. The only one of the four competing titles not to share in this gain is the Observer, down 42 per cent despite an expensive relaunch of its colour magazine. Nude pictures of Madonna, published in the second week of the relaunch, won many extra readers, but they did not remain with the paper.

Best performer of the Sunday quality quartet was the Independent on Sunday, up 7.7 per cent, although still with the lowest circulation of the four at 404,534. The Sunday Times, at 1,195,227, remains dominant, with a 3.9 per cent gain partly attributable to its serialisation of Andrew Morton's book on the Princess of Wales.

The explanation for the slow drift of readers away from the mass-market tabloids could be their increasing stridence and intrusiveness in reporting scandals involving politicians and the royal family. With their circulation base dwindling, the papers vie to provide ever-more-hysterical revelations. This appears to alienate more readers, making the market still more competitive.

At the end of its second year, the Press Complaints Commission has given a confident account of itself to Sir David Calcutt, who will deliver to the government his second set of recommendations on preventing press intrusion into privacy. The commission's self-satisfied view was not endorsed by most of those giving evidence in the past few weeks to the Commons committee looking at the Labour MP Clive Soley's Press Freedom and Responsibility Bill.

Senior press executives believe Sir David will recommend legislation to ban the use of secret recording devices and long-lens cameras on private property — as he has suggested before — and perhaps the establishment of a press authority with statutory powers. The government ignored his earlier recommendation, but recent lobby leaks suggest they might feel obliged to act this time, especially as the Conservative papers have become less loyal allies since the general election.

Such restrictions — although loudly opposed by editors on principle — would be unlikely to affect the papers' commercial future as much as changes in the economy would. An end to the recession would increase advertising revenue and help pay for promotion to increase circulation.

So when the papers aim editorial darts at the chancellor of the exchequer they are driven by that most potent of motivators — self-interest. Until the green shoots of recovery burst into flower there will be no return to the expansive mood of the late eighties and no return to prosperity in the print — The Independent.

Senate endorses 1993 draft budget

(Continued from page 1)

Others fields tackled in the committee's report included the agriculture sector, roads, national security and public administration.

The committee expressed regret that successive governments' decisions and plans to promote the agriculture sector ended in failure. The successive governments gave many promises to develop the sector and funds were spent on drilling artesian wells and building dams or constructing irrigation canals, but the results fell far short of meeting the country's aspirations, the report said.

Following an open debate on the report, Finance Minister Basel Jaradneh addressed the Senate, clarifying a number of points raised by Senators but giving conflicting figures about the unemployment in Jordan.

In the minister's view, only 100,000 Jordanians are considered unemployed in accordance with the initial results of a general survey conducted in 1991 by the department of statistics.

The survey, which covered 50,000 families, showed that the Jordanian work force stood at 876,000 and that the rate of unemployment stood at 18 per cent in 1991, rising by three per cent in

1992. Referring to poverty, the minister said that according to the survey only less than two per cent of families in urban regions have a monthly income less than JD 50, that 11 per cent of the population's income reaches up to JD 99 and that 19 per cent receive up to JD 149 in monthly income.

Mr. Jaradneh said that 19 per cent of the people receive up to JD 99 a month in the rural regions and that 28 per cent receive up to JD 149.

The minister said that these figures do not reflect the estimates included in the committee's report which stated that between 40 and 50 per cent of the population live under or around the poverty line.

However, he noted, the government was exerting tremendous efforts to deal with pockets of poverty. The National Aid Fund's capital for this year has risen to JD 13 million to be distributed to the needy families, which also receive subsidised basic foodstuffs, he said.

Referring to the volume of investments, the ministers noted that in 1992 investments reached 27 per cent in terms of gross domestic product, up from 22 per cent in 1991.

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IAAF: Boycotting athletes face Olympics ban

JAKARTA (R) — The International Athletics Federation announced Saturday that any athlete boycotting major track and field events would be barred from the Olympics and Grand Prix finals.

Istvan Gyulai, secretary general of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), said the new rules were framed to counter a threat from leading athletes to boycott the Stuttgart World Outdoor Championships unless the top finishers were awarded prize money.

"If the selected athlete without a valid reason refuses to compete in a designated competition, then at the international level they should not be invited to the next Grand Prix final in which they have events and shall not be eligible for the next Olympic Games," Gyulai told reporters after a council meeting.

Gyulai said the new rules gave member federations a say in where their athletes would compete, a right they did not have previously when they gave an authorisation to an agent.

He said member federations could still authorise agents to be representatives of the athletes, but the contracts would now be restricted to a maximum one-year term.

The new contracts would insist on agents ensuring their athletes' participation in competition listed by the IAAF — regional championships, the World Outdoor Championships, the Athletics World Cup and the Olympic Games.

Agents for several top athletes have threatened to withdraw their clients from the Stuttgart Championships in August and the World Indoor Championships in September.

Toronto if prize money is not on offer.

Joe Douglas, head of the powerful Santa Monica Track Club, said earlier this week IAAF president Primo Nebiolo's failure to take seriously a threatened boycott could prove a costly mistake.

On Friday the IAAF council rejected the demands for direct prize money at Stuttgart.

But it agreed to hand \$7.5 million to national federations to offer the athletes.

Federations will receive \$1,000 per athlete they send to the championships, on top of their travel and accommodation costs.

Meanwhile, the IAAF set Butch Reynolds a one-month deadline Saturday to stop all legal action and withdraw allegations of misconduct against them over a failed drug test.

Reynolds, the 400 metres world record holder, was awarded \$27.3 million damages against the IAAF last year by an Ohio court after being suspended in 1990 for failing the test.

The IAAF council asks Mr. Reynolds to retract his libellous statements and to suspend all legal action against the IAAF. This will be officially sent to him. If in one month from now this is not done, the council will consider how to proceed," IAAF Secretary General Gyulai said.

He gave no indication of what further action the IAAF might take if Reynolds did not heed the deadline. Reynolds' suspension ended December 31 and he is now free to run again.

He has continued to protest his innocence, but the IAAF said they did not recognise the jurisdiction of the Ohio courts in the affair.

Maleeva sisters make Grand Slam history; Graf, Edberg advance in Australian Open

MELBOURNE (Agencies) — The Maleeva sisters made tennis history Saturday when all three won through to the last 16 to the Australian Open tennis championships, the first siblings to do so in a Grand Slam event.

It was a hectic day for proud coach and mother Yulia Berberian-Maleeva as she scrambled from court to court following the progress of daughters, Manuela, Katerina and teenager Magdalena.

The Younger two won easily in straight sets but the eldest, Manuela, 25, had to battle a pulled muscle in her right thigh for a plucky three sets win over American Ginger Helgeson.

The injury to ninth seed Manuela took some of the gloss off a remarkable achievement for the Maleeva family, particularly Yulia who was nine times national champion of her native Bulgaria.

"It is very moving for me," she told reporters.

"We are hopeful Manuela will be fit for her next match otherwise it will be not such good history," she added.

Manuela, who now plays for Switzerland after marrying tennis coach Francois Fragniere, had to have her leg strapped twice during her two hour 18-minute match.

Maleeva-Fragniere seems to be jinxed at the Open, suffering a broken finger in 1991 and defaulting in last year's quarterfinals with a broken toe.

"I don't want even to think about giving up, right now I would be ready to play even if I'm a bit injured," she said.

Her younger sisters breezed through their matches — 14th seed Katerina, 23, beat Germany's 28th-ranked Barbara Rittner 6-1 while 15th seed Magdalena, 17, beat another German, Meike Babel, 6-3 6-2.

The youngest sister will have toughest match in the next round, facing world number two Steffi Graf who won through to the last 16 when fellow German Claudia Porwik retired injured after losing the first set 6-1.

Katerina plays seventh-seeded teenager Jennifer Capriati.

Meanwhile Steffi Graf won more easily than she wanted, but Stefan Edberg had things tougher than he should have at the Australian Open Saturday.

Two-time champion Edberg had won all six of his previous meetings with Amos Mansdorf but struggled for two and a half hours before advancing to the fourth round with a 6-3, 6-1, 1-6, 7-6 (7-5) triumph.

Edberg was cheered on by dozens of singing, cheering Swedish fans, whose raucous behaviour appeared to upset Mansdorf. After the last point, he stared hard in their direction.

"I felt I had more chances than him," said a disappointed Mansdorf before heading straight to the airport.

"I played very well in the fourth set. It's good to be out there a long time. I need to play matches," said Edberg.

Frenchman Arnaud Boetsch, Swede Christian Bergstrom and New Zealander Brett Steven, all unseeded, joined Edberg, seeded



The Maleeva sisters Katerina (left) and Magdalena

second, in the round of 16. Boetsch next plays Edberg.

Also advancing were No. 10 seed Wayne Ferreira of South Africa and resurgent Australian Richard Fromberg.

Three-time women's champion Graf made it to the final 16 when her opponent Claudia Porwik was forced to withdraw with an ankle injury.

Graf won the first set 6-1 in 18 minutes.

Porwik then twisted her right ankle in the first game of the second set of the all-German match and was given treatment at court-side. She played three more points but then retired in obvious pain.

"The first thing you worry about is how bad it is for her," Graf said. "To win this way is not so satisfying."

Graf's loss to Lori McNeil in the first round of the 1992 Virginia Slims Championship was her first before the quarterfinals in any tournament since 1985.

She missed last year's Australian Open with Rubella.

Graf said she planned to practice with male players in a bid to make up for the matchplay she missed but said she was happy with her form.

Porwik said she had injured the same ankle twice previously.

Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, the No. 4 seed from Spain, had a trouble-free third-round match.

The determined baseline continued with her more aggressive approach and ousted spirited Radka Zrubakova of Slovakia 6-1, 6-3 for her third successive straight-sets triumph.

She next plays No. 11 seed Anke Huber of Germany, who beat Ines Gorrochategui of Argentina 6-2, 7-5.

American Jennifer Capriati, 16, the No. 7 seed, broke through in the 11th game of each set to beat Natalia Zvereva of Belarus 7-5, 7-5 and showed no effects of the virus that left her bed-ridden three days earlier.

Two-time finalist Mary Joe Fernandez, seeded fifth, was given a first-set jolt before beating Naoko Sawamatsu of Japan 2-6, 6-3, 6-1.

That's Kelly Jones in the last 16 at the Australian Open Kelly who?

Jones' circuitous sojourn from obscurity in Singles to the fourth round at the first Grand Slam of the year began in 1987, the year after he ended his all-American career at Pepperdine, which has one of the best college tennis

programmes in the United States.

"I just laugh that I'm here, because it's been a long time since I won any singles match in any draw," the 447th-ranked Jones said Friday after upsetting David Wheaton, 6-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2. Only two days earlier, Wheaton had knocked off No. 6 Michael Chang.

Jones said he would celebrate with "just a few giggles" and not even think about his next match against No. 12 Guy Forget. Heck, Jones didn't know he was going to play Wheaton until he peeked at the draw Thursday night.

It's understandable that Jones would not want to look ahead too much.

Having played through the qualifying rounds just to get into the draw, Jones' three victories this week equal his total Grand Slam singles wins in 11 previous tournaments in six years as a professional and the number of singles matches he played in 1992.

He won his first Grand Slam singles match at the 1987 Australian, then on grass, and it would be three years before he won another. That also happened at the Australian, but on hard courts at the new National Tennis Centre.

In his six years as a professional, Jones won only one other singles match in a Grand Slam event — the first round of Wimbledon in 1990.

No one thought much about Jones as a singles player anymore. He hadn't even played Grand Slam singles since losing the first round of the Australian two years ago, and winning only one game against Todd Witsken.

So when he suddenly rose up and beat Wheaton, No. 47 in the world, Jones was surprised as anyone.

"This is something completely different," Jones said, unable to explain how he's gotten this far. "Your guess is as good as mine. I had a good attitude about coming here, had a nice long break, and I really wanted to play some more singles this year."

Swedish fans add colour at Open

They descend on Melbourne every January. Garish figures with painted faces shouting in comprehensible slogans.

The Swedish fans, hundreds of them, are one of the trademarks of the Australian Open tennis championships.

It's freezing at home and the soccer season is in recess, so the young Swedes opt to mix a hol-

day in the down under summer sun with the chance to cheer on their compatriots.

With faces painted in their blue-and-yellow national colours, the Swedish hordes carouse and sing loud songs in their native language.

Many wear viking horn hats. Others go around without shirts and swirl cheap wine from plastic bladders.

"At home in Sweden now it's so terrible," said Thomas Svensson, a student from Gothenburg.

"Of course I had heard about the Australian tennis because many Swedish players come here and we can see it on TV."

The Swedes occupy the same rows in the upper sections of the Centre Court for each match featuring one of their countrymen.

"Alla vi som alskar clapper nu (all who love Sweden clap your hands)," they chant endlessly between games.

They are loud and they enjoy themselves, but they don't upset anyone and actually add to the atmosphere of the Open.

"It is true that many of us know not much about tennis, but we like the sunshine and we like the games and it is good to support our players," Svensson told Australian Associated Press.

Tournament loses best personality

If Andrei Medvedev was disappointed with his loss to No. 7 Petr Korda at the Australian Open Friday, journalists were virtually inconsolable.

They'd just lost their best source of quotes in a tournament largely bereft of personalities with the absence of such characters as Andre Agassi, John McEnroe and Goran Ivanisevic.

The 18-year-old Medvedev, one of tennis' rising stars after jumping from 226th to 24th in the last year, has won legions of fans here with his blistering groundstrokes and very wit. His banter is even more remarkable considering that English is his fourth language.

Instead of formula responses like, "I think I played well but I can do better," or "my opponent played great and I was a little off," the Ukrainian gives some thought to the questions he fields at the post-match news conferences.

This is the guy who denied the media guide's claim that Nick Faldo was his favourite sportsman, saying he'd never even heard of the golfer. Pro basketball's Michael Jordan topped his list. And his favourite tennis player? Michael Jordan, too.

After falling to Korda 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-5) in the third round, one reporter tried to ease into things by suggesting the error-plagued match and featured some good tennis.

Medvedev, wearing a Chicago Bulls cap, was having none of it, looking at the man as if he must have been watching some other court. After all, the two players combined for 17 service breaks, and neither looked as though he could find a way to win, committing numerous errors.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY JANUARY 24, 1993

By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Relaxation is definitely the order of the day today with the moon void of course. In short, that reads "do only that which you must". Painting, meditating, reading or catching up on your piano lessons is the thing.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) One who is able to help you with your assets is looking askance at the manner in which you handle them so seek and take this expert's suggestions.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) All kinds of improved outlets are awaiting your acceptance if you will look into and study the new opportunities which are at your fingertips.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Private conversations with a lesser person are now at hand. If you are to have a smooth mundane plan under which to operate in the days ahead.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) When you and a partner cannot reach an agreement or need more facts, figures seek out a purposeful, good friend and query for the answers.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Although you may not be aware of it an influential person is quickly observing how you are performing duties or promises made and will later be helpful.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Many sensible thoughts are running through your mind on how to make your life more as meets your idealistic concepts and do something about it now.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Delve into all sorts of statements and reports of value to you and to your usual business and personal contacts and get them efficiently made.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Take a good look at how many benefits of a practical nature that you are getting out of the duties you are performing and you find ways to enhance them.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Romantic interests can now be arranged so they are more satisfactory in the days even though it will take some planning with your attachment.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Confidential discussions with members of your household can now be the best method by which you have a closer and more harmonious relationship at home.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Going off on a jaunt or an information collecting trip with a good friend could be especially effective to both of you today or tonight.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"Stanley, you need to be more careful with your diet. You're leaving a trail of cholesterol!"

JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GYNAM

GATEA

MILDIP

GRYPIN

THE WORST THING ABOUT GOING TO THE DENTIST.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: THE

Yesterday's Jumbles: PIANO DAUNT ITALIC GARBLE

Answer: One word which describes the color of her dresser gown—"INGRATATE" (in gray she sits)

(Answers tomorrow)

THE Daily Crossword by Roger Jurgovans

ACROSS

1 Automobile

8 Cupid

10 Slightly open

14 Ascended

15 Merry

18 Corporate

21 Actor and businessman

20 Un-huh

21 Distresses

22 Grity

23 Boy: Sp.

24 Shout

25 Hound

26 God of thunder

31 Crowd

34 Leave secretly

35 Whale hunter

36 Torture victim

37 Politician and author

40 — off (angry)

41 Frigid

42 Scout leader

43 Damocles' sword

44 Narrative of exploits

45 Grins

46 Oriental sauce

47 Pace

48 Petal perfume

49 Harbinger

50 Constructed

51 Super and

52 Signs

53 Studies

54 Flawing

55 Coastal bird

56 Weasels

DOWN

1 Infant grant

2 God of love

3 Finished

4 Tennis great

5 Recent prof.

6 Once more

7 Danny's girl and Nobel novelist

8 Auto man

9 College cheer

10 Aquatic plants

11 Elton

12 Measured

13 Bright

14 Finger

15 Addict

16 — do well

17 Ear feature

18 Rhythms

19 Narrow street

20 Serious

21 Placed

22 Dwell on

23 Example

24 Papal vestment

25 Gaucho

26 Equipment

27 Exiled

28 Macri figure

29 Server

30 Improvised

31 Accompaniment

32 Angry

33 Forward

34 Tardy

35 Suits

36 Succeed

37 Melody

38 Sunburns

39 Shave

40 Handcuff

41 Look over

42 Poem

43 King Cole

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Clinton invited to a scrum

LONDON (AP) — English rugby officials are hoping for a reunion with a former Oxford player who went on to bigger things in the United States — President Clinton. Chris McCooey, who introduced Clinton to the sport almost 25 years ago, told the Daily Mail newspaper that he would issue an invitation to the president. "I shall tell him (Clinton) that we have a good veterans' side and that if he's up to it, he could probably find a place on it," he was quoted as saying. McCooey remembers Clinton as "fairly unfit and not at all athletic, too lumpy for that."

Sammer to leave inter for Borussia Dortmund

ROME (R) — Germany midfielder Mathias Sammer is returning to soccer at home with Borussia Dortmund after less than half a season at Internazionale. "The two clubs have reached an agreement for the transfer of the player," Inter spokesman Thomas Villa said Friday. "All that remains is for Sammer and Borussia to settle the details of his contract. But we can now say he is a Borussia player." Sammer, a regular member of Germany's squad, joined the Italian club from Bundesliga champions VfB Stuttgart just over six months ago.

Sainz worried about driving new car

MONTE CARLO (R) — World champion Carlos Sainz admitted to being "a bit worried" about his chances in the Monte Carlo Rally when he arrived in the principality after the untimed liaison drive. Sainz, who took the world title last year with Toyota, will be driving a Lancia for the first time in the opening round of the world Championship which started early Saturday. Last year's winner Didier Auriol will also be driving a new car. "I'm confident and I'll be looking for another victory," said the Frenchman, who joined Toyota after finishing third in the championship with Lancia last season. The 3,091-km rally, held entirely on tarmac, will include 22 timed stages totalling 593 kms.

Hornets upset Bulls, Sonics overcome Warriors

CHICAGO (R) — Alonzo Mourning scored 12 of his 19 points in a third quarter that turned a game and a lot of history around as the Charlotte Hornets broke a 17-game losing streak against the Chicago Bulls 105-97. Dell Curry also scored 19 for Charlotte, which snapped a four-game losing skid and won for the first time in nine visits to Chicago stadium. The Hornets had not beaten the Bulls since the first-ever meeting between the two teams in 1988. Michael Jordan scored 28 and Scottie Pippen had 21 points and 11 rebounds for the National Basketball Association defending champions, who have split their last six home games. At Golden State, Ricky Pierce had a season-high 33 points and Gary Payton scored 23 as the Seattle SuperSonics survived double overtime to

CIS countries agree to set up inter-state bank

MINSK, Belarus (R) — The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) has agreed to set up an inter-state bank to facilitate trade and help clear payments between member states, the head of the CIS press centre said Friday. Yegor Gurevich said Russia, which would contribute more capital than other states, would have 50 per cent of the shares of the new bank. But a two-thirds majority would be needed to push through any decisions. He did not say how many CIS countries would join the bank. Economic ties between members of the CIS, which groups 10 of the 15 former Soviet republics, have virtually collapsed since the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991. Companies complain that payments between states take weeks or even months.

U.S. exports 188 billion cigarettes

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States exported a record 188 billion cigarettes worth nearly \$4 billion in fiscal 1992, a tobacco industry group says.

The industry's overall exports, including leaf and manufactured tobacco products, totaled more than \$5.7 billion, according to the Tobacco Merchants Association of the U.S. Inc.

Cigarettes accounted for \$3.9 billion of that total.

A relative trickle of tobacco imports into the United States meant the industry saw a \$4.2 billion trade surplus — nearly a quarter of the nation's overall agricultural trade surplus of \$18 billion in fiscal 1992, the Princeton, N.J. association said.

Tobacco products were the third-leading contributor to the nation's agricultural trade surplus, behind the grain and feed category and oilseeds.

Although cigarette shipments to other countries grew from an all-time high of 184 billion in fiscal 1991 to 188 billion in 1992, the industry's surplus slipped by nearly \$1 billion from fiscal 1991 due to an increasingly competitive world market for tobacco products, said Farrell Delman, president of the association.

Cigarette exports have nearly tripled since 1986.

Iraqi dinar seen falling sharply if overtures to Clinton fail

BAGHDAD (R) — The Iraqi dinar has had a volatile week, almost as volatile as the ups and downs in the confrontation between Baghdad and the West.

Dragged down by Western air raids and missile attacks, it rose on the change in the White House, and then settled back to a rate midway between the week's high and low.

Traders in the streets of Baghdad said the dinar would probably fall again sharply if the Iraqi government's overtures to the new U.S. administration come to nothing.

It was trading at 35 to the U.S. dollar on Baghdad's thriving black market Friday — down from a peak of 40 Sunday, when more than 40 cruise missiles destroyed a high-tech machine-tool factory on the southern outskirts of the capital.

On Wednesday, the day Iraq put into effect a unilateral ceasefire with Western warplanes and former U.S. president George Bush left the White House, it traded at 30 to the dollar.

"Our dinar is weak, volatile, prone to rumours," one trader said. "We shun business because we are uncertain what path it will take next week."

Before Iraq invaded Kuwait in

August 1990, the Iraqi dinar was worth \$3.10. That is still the official rate but in effect it applies only to government transactions.

Some traders say experience has taught them it is sometimes better to keep their dollars than trade in them.

"But you never know. No one expected Iraq to declare a unilateral ceasefire," said one.

"People listen to the news and they now realise it is perhaps the second Bush in the White House as far as Iraq is concerned," one trader added.

President Bill Clinton says he will uphold the hard line taken by the Bush administration in its dealings with Iraq.

Baghdad traders interviewed by Reuters saw no sign that Mr. Clinton would help them resume business by easing the embargo imposed by the United Nations to punish Iraq for the invasion.

The embargo has prevented Iraq exporting all but a trickle of oil, starving the government of foreign currency.

Squeezed by a government ban on luxury imports and intimidated by the execution of 42 traders on charges of profiteering and illegal hoarding, many businessmen have moved out of foreign trade and into safer but less profitable lines such as cars,

real estate and buying and selling stocks.

"We have millions and millions of dinars. They lose value almost every day. We have to do something," one trader said.

Some are busy buying dollars and other hard currencies in the hope of resuming trade in highly lucrative imports.

"The government cannot continue with its ban on foreign commodities for long. It will relent sooner or later," said a trader who specialised in electrical appliances until the government banned the trade.

Diplomats say Iraq's economy, with rampant inflation and all sorts of distortions and shortages, is in a parlous state.

The black market is becoming more and more central to the economy but the government still sticks to the official rate.

Finance ministry officials say the rate reflects their belief that the Iraqi economy is fundamentally strong and that the prospects will be bright when sanctions come to an end.

One trader disagreed. "That is a dream. \$3.1 to one dinar, that will never come again. Twelve years of war and more than two years of stringent U.N. sanctions have done a lot of damage to the economy," he said.

Morocco makes dirham convertible for current deals

RABAT (R) — Morocco has officially informed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that its dirham is now convertible for all purposes except capital transfers, Finance Minister Mohammed Berrada said Friday.

Currently trading at 8.97 to the U.S. dollar, the dirham is convertible for current operations, that is mainly imports and exports, but also including foreign insurance, travel, private loans, medical expenses and student fees.

"We have sought to simplify and facilitate financial transactions with foreign countries, and eliminate domestic price distortions to make morocco competitive in the world economy," Mr. Berrada told a news conference.

He said he was confident the value of the dirham would remain stable, and foreign exchange reserves at present at a record high

of \$3.4 billion would rise this year to \$3.8 billion, the equivalent of six months' imports.

"This year will be a test of our ability to resist the hazards of the world economy," he added.

"Despite a drought and massive imports of cereals, 80 per cent of which were paid cash last year, our reserves increased. It means our structural adjustment programme was a success," he elaborated.

The adjustment programme recommended by the IMF and World Bank had straightened out the country's finances and enabled it to forego any more rescheduling of its foreign debt of \$21 billion.

Mr. Berrada said inflation was kept down to 4.9 per cent in 1992, compared to the 5.5 per cent forecast, and it would be maintained at an acceptable level this year.

Cash worries cloud future of IFAD

ROME (R) — A financial dispute between member countries of the U.N. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) sparked questions Friday about whether it had lost its viability and should be merged with another agency.

"IFAD has entered a period of uncertainty," said an agency source attending an annual meeting of the body's governing council.

The source said there was growing speculation among members of a merger of IFAD with the much larger Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), another Rome-based U.N. food agency.

IFAD was founded in 1977 to provide loans and grants for long-term projects to help the rural poor in developing countries.

Funding is provided for projects such as irrigation, livestock, fisheries, processing plants and research.

A dispute between developed Western countries and OPEC nations is holding up replenishment of IFAD, which needs to raise \$600 million to keep the fund in operation.

Western countries have said they will contribute 60 per cent of that amount if the members of OPEC — Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries — provide the other 40 per cent.

The OPEC countries, however, say they should contribute a smaller percentage because lower oil prices have left them with less

money to give.

Representatives of IFAD's member countries discussed the funding crisis during the meeting but no compromise was reached.

"If IFAD is to continue to perform a useful operation as a separate institution, it needs the support of its membership as a whole," said British representative Peter Freeman.

"Although it is too early to despair, we cannot continue for much longer," he said, adding that IFAD's new lending operation may have to slow down or stop.

"I very much hope we shall not reach that point," he said.

IFAD officials said the agency had enough money to continue funding projects in 1993, but would run out of cash for future projects if the dispute was not resolved.

In other business, the governing council accepted three new members — Albania, Armenia and the Cook Islands — bringing the number of countries in IFAD to 150.

Albanian Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Serreqi said rapid agricultural development was necessary to end widespread poverty in his country after the fall of communism.

"We need a helping hand to get on our feet," he told the meeting.

Rome is also home of a third U.N. food agency, the World Food Programme (WFP), which specialises in emergency aid.

New Bank of England governor stresses monetary stability and fighting inflation

LONDON (R) — The newly-appointed governor of the Bank of England, Britain's central bank, said Friday that tackling inflation was his top priority.

Eddie George, currently the bank's deputy governor, said he saw his main task as helping the government to keep prices down and create a steady recovery from economic recession.

"The foremost issue is stability, not for its own sake, but because

it's been instability and inflation that have done the damage... that's the number one agenda. I think that's the order of the day," he told a news conference.

Chain-smoking George, 54, built a reputation as a respected back-room operator in a 30-year career at the bank, weathering some of the greatest crises in its history of almost 300 years.

London bankers have nicknamed him "hard" Eddie and

"steady" Eddie for his determined monetarism and steady manner. He prefers the "steady" label, saying, "I take it as a compliment."

Mr. George was favourite for the top job, having helped to rebuild the bank's credibility after the BCCI banking scandal in 1991 and having survived the crisis which forced sterling out of the European currency grid last September.

He takes over in July from Robin Leigh-Pemberton, a courtly outsider appointed in 1983 by the prime minister Margaret Thatcher. His deputy will be intellectual Rupert Pennant-Rea, 45, editor of the Economist magazine.

Mr. George said Mr. Pennant-Rea would bring "fresh air" to the bank. The Economist has promoted the idea that the Bank of England should break free of its traditional control by the government and become an independent central bank.

Both Mr. George and Mr. Pennant-Rea said they believed in the principle of an independent central bank — separating the role of monetary management from the government. This remains anathema to the Conservative Party government.

But Mr. George said the independence issue must be secondary to monetary stability. He noted that, with his appointment, Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont spelled out for the first time that the role of the central bank was to "bring about a lasting reduction in the rate of inflation."

He declined to be drawn on when the British economy might start to recover from a lingering two-year recession.

But, echoing the government view, he said: "I believe that we have put in place the basis for a sustained expansion over quite a long period over the rest of the '90s."

Australia keen to maintain wheat trade with Iraq

MELBOURNE (R) — Australia, the world's fourth largest wheat producer, said Friday it plans to retain wheat trading links with Iraq despite renewed Gulf hostilities and an unpaid debt of 600 million Australian dollars (\$396 million).

The Australian Wheat Board (AWB), the country's sole agent for wheat exports, said that although Iraq was its biggest debtor, it accepted Iraq's promise to meet its obligations and would resume wheat sales when Iraq could afford to pay.

"We would anticipate holding them as a customer," AWB managing director John Lawrenson said in an interview.

He said AWB officials had visited Iraq since the Gulf war ended in early 1991 and he aimed to maintain those contacts.

Australia, whose annual wheat exports of more than one billion Australian dollars (\$660 million) are exceeded only by the United States, the European Community

and Canada, sold 879,129 tonnes of wheat to Iraq in the year to Sept. 30, 1992.

At the average Australian wheat export price in 1991/92, this would have been worth about 220 million Australian dollars (\$145 million).

Iraq was the third largest importer of Australian wheat after Egypt and Japan in 1991/92, when total Australian shipments totalled 7.12 million tonnes.

Iraq has paid in gold for most of its Australian wheat imports since the Gulf war ended in early 1991, because of a currency shortage.

Mr. Lawrenson said future sales depended on the lifting of embargoes preventing Iraq exporting its vast oil supplies and earning much-needed foreign currency to pay its debts.

The 600 million Australian dollars debt relates to sales made before the war broke out in January 1991.

Greece announces tight incomes policy for 1993

ATHENS (R) — Greece Friday announced a tight incomes policy for 1993 but pledged 1994 would be a better year.

National Economy Minister Stephanos Manos told reporters that public employees would get a four per cent salary rise compared to 1992 and the government estimated inflation this year would average about 12.5 per cent.

Pensioners would get the same increase from the state plus an extra two per cent in the second half of 1993.

"This year will be very tight and painful as the debt servicing expenditures amount to two trillion drachmas (\$10 billion) which equals the amount the state pays for salaries and pensions," Mr. Manos said.

The conservative government launched a tough three-year austerity programme when it took power in 1990 to cut chronic deficits. It includes below inflation pay rises, increases in public services and lay-offs in many public companies.

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Financial Markets			
in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank			
U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York Close Date 21/1/93	New York Close Date 22/1/93	
Sterling Pound	1.5225	1.5312	
Deutsche Mark	1.6141	1.5900	
Swiss Franc	1.4798	1.4585	
French Franc	5.4545	5.3785	
Japanese Yen	124.93	125.11	
European Currency Unit	1.2242 **	1.2320	
* USD per STG			
** European Opening at 8:00 a.m. GMT			
Inter-currency Interest Rates			
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS 12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.00	5.15	5.31 5.62
Sterling Pound	7.06	6.75	6.50 6.31
Deutsche Mark	8.43	8.25	7.87 7.31
Swiss Franc	5.43	5.50	5.43 5.25
French Franc	11.56	11.25	10.12 9.18
Japanese Yen	3.71	3.62	3.43 3.37
European Currency Unit	9.50	9.63	9.25 8.62
* Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.			
Precious Metals			
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal USD/Oz JD/Gm
Gold	328.75	6.45	Silver 3.71 .080
* 21 Karat			
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.688	0.688	
Sterling Pound	1.0490	1.0542	
Deutsche Mark	0.4301	0.4331	
Swiss Franc	0.4699	0.4777	
French Franc	0.1274	0.1280	
Japanese Yen	0.5480	0.5507	
Dutch Guilder	0.3832	0.3851	
Swedish Krona	0.0961	0.0966	
Italian Lira	0.0469	0.0471	
Belgian Franc	0.02094	0.02104	
* Per 100			
Other Currencies			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
Bahraini Dinar	1.7970	1.8180	
Lebanese Lira	0.0350	0.0400	
Saudi Riyal	0.1833	0.1845	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2350	2.2900	
Qatari Riyal	0.1866	0.1880	
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2150	
Omani Riyal	1.7560	1.7750	
UAE Dirham	0.1866	0.1880	
Greek Drachma	0.3150	0.3230	
Cypriot Pound	1.4200	1.4450	
* Per 100			
CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market			
Index	12/1/93	Close	19/1/93 Close
All-Share	182.04		188.71
Banking Sector	150.71		136.57
Insurance Sector	198.40		205.87
Industry Sector	251.26		259.72
Services Sector	249.46		252.25
* December 31, 1992 = 100			

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET			
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SYRIANIA			
TELEPHONE: 560170 / 643170			
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SYRIANIA 23/01/1993			
COMPANY'S NAME	UNIT	TRADING PREV. VOLUME PRICE	OPENING CLOSING PRICE PRICE
2			
ARAB BANK		529,580	134.000 134.000 137.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK		641,802	134.000 134.000 137.500
CATINO MORGAN BANK		1,962	23.380 24.520 24.930
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT		57,163	23.360 24.520 24.930
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK		254,462	1.960 4.000 4.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT		246,750	1.960 4.000 4.100
JORDAN KUNATZ BANK		207,473	2.420 2.500 2.640
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK		76,499	1.850 1.860 1.880
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT		116,058	1.110 1.120 1.230
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT		278,885	1.330 4.400 4.410
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT		336,413	1.850 2.560 2.570
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK		31,990	6.850 6.900 6.980
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT		34,156	6.850 6.900 6.980
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT		100,522	1.860 1.880 1.890
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT		111,068	1.860 1.880 1.890
JORDAN INSURANCE		38,693	2.600 3.420 3.780
UNION INSURANCE		4,288	3.350 3.360 3.360
ARABIAN LIFE INSURANCE		15,690	4.000 4.000 4.000
GENERAL ARABIAN INSURANCE		5,363	3.380 3.490 3.490
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT		24,356	4.070 4.070 4.070
ROYAL LIFE INSURANCE		1,413	3.560 3.530 3.530
ARAB BANK & ACCIDENT INSURANCE		29,637	2.330 2.330 2.330
JORDAN LIFE INSURANCE		1,425	2.850 2.950 2.850
ARABIAN ECONOMIC POWER		53,792	1.730 1.760 1.720
UNITED TRADING ELECTRICITY		4,614	2.280 2.280 2.280
VEHICLES OWNERS FUNDATION		7,680	5.500 5.780 5.780
ARAB INSURANCE		71,492	8.580 8.580 8.580
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES		36,610	2.490 2.500 2.610
ARABIAN INVESTMENT		19,192	2.730 2.730 2.730
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT		64,614	1.800 1.830 1.830
JORDAN GOLF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT		30,769	0.880 0.910 0.910
TRAVEL ENTERPRISES & RECREATION		1,108	1.000 1.000 1.000
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER		4,732	1.500 1.500 1.530
ROYAL HOTEL, RESORTS & TOURISM		7,422	1.500 1.500 1.530
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & CONCORD HOTEL		95,635	2.590 2.610 2.540
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER		7,422	1.500 1.500 1.530
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES		21,168	1.620 1.560 1.560
JORDAN PROSPECT HIGHER		104,883	4.800 4.850 4.910
JORDAN RETAILING COMPANY		1,018	1.180 1.180 1.180
JORDAN TRADING		1,063	7.350 7.700 7.700
WOOD INDUSTRIES		1,063	7.350 7.700 7.700
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL		109,484	6.940 7.000 6.950
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT		109,484	6.940 7.000 6.950
MAHABOT AGRICULTURAL MANUFACTURING		177,996	3.320 3.410 3.320
JORDAN DAIRY		2,428	2.320 2.350 2.560
JORDAN DAIRY		274,216	1.700 1.720 1.860
THE PUBLIC MIXING		106,886	1.090 1.160 1.240
ARABIAN INVESTMENT INDUSTRIES		25,150	2.500 2.500 2.500
SPINNING & WEAVING		336,788	1.350 1.350 28.350
RAPIA INDUSTRIES		27,996	3.660 3.700 3.700
JORDAN GLASS INDUSTRIES		27,996	3.660 3.700 3.700
DAR AL BANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT		266,923	11.950 12.300 12.080
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT		266,923	11.950 12.300 12.080
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY		118,648	12.900 12.950 12.780
GENERAL INVESTMENT		11,848	1.600 1.620 1.190
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING		44,396	2.140 2.150 2.110
JORDAN STEEL INDUSTRIES		28,279	5.970 5.970 5.970
INTERNATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY		28,279	5.970 5.970 5.970
INTERNATIONAL STEEL-CHROME INDUSTRIES		272,033	3.960 4.000 4.070
JORDAN STEEL INDUSTRIES		272,033	3.960 4.000 4.070
JORDAN POWDER INDUSTRIES		148,616	3.130 3.160 3.080
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES		32,969	14.280 14.320 14.300
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & WATER-UTILITY		35,467	1.530 1.620 1.500
JORDAN WOOD INDUSTRIES / UNICO		95,760	3.850 3.970 3.950
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JORDAN WOOD INDUSTRIES / UN			

CIS leaders sign new charter; Ukraine wants to wait and see

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — Russia and six other former Soviet republics left a reluctant Ukraine behind and forged a new Commonwealth that strengthens economic ties but weakens military and political links.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk Friday declared that Ukraine remains a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States, but said it was too soon to sign the new Commonwealth charter. Ukraine, along with Russia and Belarus, founded the Commonwealth as the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991.

"The Commonwealth keeps on working and we are all part of the Commonwealth," Mr. Kravchuk said during a news conference with his fellow leaders in the Belarussian capital.

The leaders of Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia signed the new charter. Moldova and Turkmenistan also refused to sign.

During the summit, Russia and Ukraine also apparently failed to resolve differences over how to control the 176 long-range nuclear missiles based on Ukrainian soil.

Ukrainian lawmakers have objected to closer Commonwealth ties, fearing the former republic's long-sought independence would

be imperiled and the country would again be under Russia's domination.

Turkmenistan expressed concern that the new charter would threaten its sovereignty. The reason for Moldova's refusal to sign the document was not immediately clear.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin expressed hope that Ukraine and the other holdouts would eventually sign.

"The decision to sign the charter is open at any time to any head of state," Mr. Yeltsin told reporters. "The state that is not prepared or needs time... can do this and in a month or two months can join the charter."

Noting the importance of the economic ties between the Commonwealth states, Mr. Kravchuk hinted Ukraine might eventually sign. "The time will come and Ukraine will make a decision," he said.

In the new charter, the leaders agreed to establish an interstate bank, in which Russia would play the leading role, and to use the Russian ruble as the currency for trade.

"Personally, I think our biggest success was to resolve issues of economic cooperation, and to define our positions in the political and military spheres," said Belarussian leader Stanislav Shushkevich.

The new Commonwealth partly destroys the rigid Soviet military structure built over several decades. It allows each of the seven signatory members to decide whether to join collective security arrangements and whether they want their own international borders to be considered Commonwealth borders.

Belarus said it wants to be a neutral state and does not want to be part of such Commonwealth provisions.

Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Armenia and Tajikistan laid the groundwork for a collective security agreement during a May 15, 1992, meeting in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent.

Mr. Yeltsin said each of the Tashkent participants would send 500 men to fortify Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan. Russia already has troops in the region.

Tajikistan has been wracked for months by civil war in which hundreds have been killed and thousands displaced. Commonwealth leaders have repeatedly voiced their concern that drugs and weapons could flow into their states from Afghanistan.

Mr. Yeltsin said he was not bothered by the looser political and military arrangements provided by the new charter.

"We think the Commonwealth may have diverse forms of coop-

eration... provided only this does not destroy the Commonwealth," he said.

Details were not released regarding military talks between the four former Soviet republics that have nuclear weapons. The nations' defense ministers also met Thursday.

Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan inherited the Soviet Union's strategic nuclear arsenal. But only Russia is allowed to keep the weapons under terms of the START I Treaty.

Ukrainian officials have said they want Ukraine to become a nuclear-free state, but have demanded security guarantees as well as material compensation before it can ratify the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Russia and Kazakhstan have ratified the pact and Belarus has said it will ratify it. Mr. Shushkevich, the Belarussian leader, said Friday that Belarus already considers the missiles on its territory to be Russian property.

The Commonwealth leaders decided to meet again on April 30 in the Armenian capital, Yerevan. Their prime ministers are scheduled to gather in Moscow in March.

There were 15 republics in the former Soviet Union. The three Baltic states, as well as Georgia and Azerbaijan, decided last year not to join the Commonwealth.

Croats, Serbs fight on in Krajina

ZAGREB (R) — Fresh clashes erupted Saturday in a Serb enclave of Croatia, overshadowing international efforts to end fighting as new talks on former Yugoslavia began in Geneva.

The fighting began after Croatian troops stormed into a U.N.-monitored neutral zone in the Serb-held Krajina region of Croatia Friday and Serbs seized heavy weapons from U.N. depots to beat back the attack.

A Reuters Television crew reported artillery duels around the Serb-held Zemunik Airport near the Adriatic port of Zadar Saturday.

They said Croat troops, encamped in hills about five kilometers west of Zadar, were firing laser-guided missiles at a Serb village which was shooting back with artillery.

The outbreak of fighting, which follows months of military tension along Krajina's U.N.-patrolled boundary, threw a grim shadow over a new round of peace talks in Geneva Saturday in a bid to end a nine-month old war in neighbouring Bosnia.

Croatian police sources in Zadar said at least six Croat soldiers were killed and 15 injured in Friday's clashes.

The figure could not be independently confirmed, but the Reuters crew saw a number of Croatian soldiers in the town's main hospital, most wounded by sniper bullets or shrapnel.

The Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency said Croatian forces using tanks had kept up attacks on southern parts of the enclave throughout the night. It said the Serb forces had sustained minor casualties, but gave no further details.

Serbian-led federal Yugoslavia threatened Friday to intervene in the Krajina conflict, possibly igniting a new Serb-Croat war, if U.N. peacekeepers failed to protect the Serb minority there.

"(Yugoslavia) has both the right and duty to protect the Serbian people, which it will undoubtedly do, if the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) fails to do so," Federal President Dobrica Cosic said in a letter to the U.N. Security Council.

In New York, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali de-



Residents of Sarajevo look at a map of Bosnia-Herzegovina with the boundaries of the proposed 10 provinces (AFP photo)

nounced Croatia's "unilateral military action" Friday, and said U.N. forces were trying to prevent any escalation.

"UNPROFOR is taking all steps in its power to prevent the situation from escalating," he said in a statement.

On Saturday, however, there was no sign of any U.N. soldiers in the area.

Instead large numbers of Croatian troops in full combat gear were seen moving towards the areas of fighting, some in convoys which included tanks, others on foot.

Zadar itself, under a general alert since Friday, was like a ghost town Saturday morning, with very few cars in the streets and police checkpoints throughout the city.

The Reuters crew reported that European Community and United Nations monitors in the area

said they had been told by Croatian military police to stay in Zadar's main hotel and ordered not to go anywhere near fighting areas.

Monitors said it was the first time the Croatian authorities had imposed such restriction on their movements.

The Reuters journalists said police had been ordered by Croatian military to bar reporters from going near the fighting.

Krajina, dubbed Sector South, is one of four U.N. Protected Areas (UNPAs) in Croatia where Serb rebels still rule a year after a U.N.-mediated ceasefire formally ended the republic's war of secession from Yugoslavia.

The areas are surrounded by so-called "pink" — neutral — zones which divide the Croat and Serb front lines and are monitored but not policed by UNPROFOR.

Sihanouk proposes May presidential vote

PEKING (Agencies) — Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk, seeking to end controversy over a date for his country's presidential elections, Saturday proposed they be held at the same time as voting for parliament in May.

Prince Sihanouk, now staying at his Peking residence for rest and medical treatment, earlier this week proposed April 5 as the best date.

However, in a written statement issued Saturday, he said he had changed his mind "to put an end to the controversy and the manoeuvrings of politicians."

He said the vote for president, in which he will be a leading candidate, should be held at exactly the same time as elections for the Constituent Assembly.

The U.N.-organised voting is scheduled for May although no exact date has been fixed. It is designed to bring peace to the South East Asian nation.

Prince Sihanouk said a simulta-

neous vote would save time and money and he had forwarded his suggestion to the United Nations.

Meanwhile, the last group of Cambodian refugees from the last camp in Thailand under Khmer Rouge control returned to their homeland Friday.

"We wish safe journey for the last group of returning refugees from Site 8," said United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative Sergio Viera de Mello as he closed the Site 8 camp.

A group of 178 refugees gathered in a field in the hillside camp to hear his address before boarding buses heading back to Cambodia.

Site 8, once home to more than 50,000 refugees, was built in 1985 after thousands of civilian followers of the radical Khmer Rouge fled attacks by the Vietnamese and sought refuge behind the Ta Ngoc border mountain range.

It was one of three refugee

camps under Khmer Rouge control.

In a separate development, two key architects of the peace plan said Friday Cambodia could be partitioned after May elections if the Khmer Rouge guerrilla group does not participate.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans spoke with reporters after arriving for talks with U.N. officials and Cambodian leaders aimed at pushing the beleaguered peace process forward.

Next Wednesday is the last day for the Khmer Rouge to register its political party to contest the election. Khmer Rouge President Khieu Samphan told Mr. Alatas in Bangkok Thursday his group will boycott the polls.

The Khmer Rouge control up to 20 per cent of Cambodia's territory and about 10 per cent of the population, according to U.N. officials.

START II is under attack in Moscow

MOSCOW (AP) — The latest U.S.-Russian arms treaty is under attack from headline lawmakers even before debate on ratifying the sweeping agreement has begun.

But Defence Ministry officials praise the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II) as a contribution to international political stability, and Russian arms control experts predict it will pass the Supreme Soviet legislature.

The Supreme Soviet is expected to begin hearings next week on the treaty signed on Jan. 3 by former President George Bush and Boris Yeltsin after a furious final round of negotiations before Mr. Bush's term expired.

The treaty would slash long-range arsenals by two-thirds on both sides over the next decade, the deepest cuts in nuclear weapons history.

While U.S. lawmakers are expected to approve the treaty, prominent hardliner Sergei Baburin told the Associated Press it could be a long time before the document comes to a vote in the supreme Soviet.

Mr. Baburin did not say which way he would advise his supporters to vote, nor how many supporters they have in the 252-member body. But he and other hardliners object to the speed with which Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev concluded the pact.

Clinton reverses limits on abortion as foes march

WASHINGTON (AP) — Exactly 20 years after a Supreme Court decision made abortion legal, President Bill Clinton lifted a series of restrictions imposed by his Republican predecessors.

"We must free science and medicine from the grasp of politics," he declared Friday, as 75,000 abortion opponents marched through the capital.

Abortion should be "safe and legal but rare," said Mr. Clinton, who acted on his third day as president to fulfill campaign pledges on abortion. Medical researchers as well as abortion activists applauded.

Organisers of the annual anti-abortion march from the White House to the Supreme Court tried to use Mr. Clinton's action to rally their troops. About 75,000 marchers turned out, according to Capitol Police, but many seemed resigned to living with a new administration unfriendly to their cause.

"I don't believe we're going to accomplish anything legislatively," said marcher C. Roy McMillan, head of the Christian Action Group.

The White House announced that Mr. Clinton had scuttled abortion restrictions imposed by Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush by signing memorandums to:

- Allow abortion counseling at federally supported clinics.
- Permit research using fetal tissue from abortions.
- Allow abortions at military hospitals and funding for overseas population control programmes.

Mr. Clinton also pledged to review a ban against importation of RU-486, the French abortion pill.

Abortion-rights activists are

pressing him to lift that restriction as well. However, deputy domestic adviser Bruce Reed said, "it wouldn't make sense for the president to just sign an order saying RU-486 is safe and the ban should be lifted. That's a determination the Food and Drug Administration has to make."

"I feel like I have just had the shackles taken off me," said Dr. Pamela Maraldo, president of Planned Parenthood. "I feel like the president took the White House out of the dinosaur age on this issue."

Medical researchers also were pleased. "We're very excited and hopeful that this will lead to an increase in research," said Dr. Richard Robbins, who has been combating Parkinson's disease with fetal tissue transplants at Yale University Medical School.

The new president, speaking at the Oval Office, said the restrictions he was lifting had interfered with both the progress of medical science and with the ability of doctors to care for their patients.

"The American people deserve the best medical treatment in the world. We're committed to providing them with nothing less," he said. "Our vision should be of an America where abortion is safe and legal but rare."

White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos said Mr. Clinton "wants to make sure that the federal government sticks with Roe vs. Wade," the Supreme Court decision 20 years ago Friday that legalised abortion.

Just before Mr. Clinton signed the memorandums, there was a minor scandal near the Supreme Court as marchers protesting that decision clashed briefly with abortion-rights counter-

Angola rebels, government agree to peace talks

LUANDA (Agencies) — U.N.-ITA rebel leader Jonas Savimbi has agreed to start U.N.-brokered peace talks with the government next week, U.N. officials announced as violence flared throughout war-torn Angola.

The agreement Friday came at the end of a sobering week for the government. Rebels defeated government troops in the key northern oil town of Soyo, and threatened to overrun the oil-rich Cabinda area and diamond mines in the northeast.

The rebels have targeted Angola's oil and diamond industries, trying to cripple the government financially. Soyo is the base for foreign oil companies, including U.S.-based Texaco.

In Washington, State Department officials said the rebels were holding 20 foreigners in the Soyo area, but added that efforts were under way for their release. They said none were Americans, but did not say what nations the prisoners were from.

Texaco said all its employees were evacuated earlier in the week, but a spokesman for the Belgian oil company, Petrofina S.A., said Wednesday that 18 company employees were believed held by rebels in Soyo.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher expressed alarm late Friday over the U.N.-ITA attacks in Soyo, saying they jeopardised the economy and environment.

"The United States will condemn in the strongest terms any attacks on U.S. facilities or personnel in Cabinda or elsewhere in Angola," Mr. Boucher said.

A U.N. official in Luanda, the Angolan capital, said Mr. Savimbi agreed to send representatives to the talks next week in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said plans to hold the talks Monday were changed because of difficulties in arranging security for rebels. A new date has not been set, said the official.

Meanwhile, Margaret Antee, the U.N. special representative for Angola, flew to U.N. Headquarters in New York Friday, where she was to meet with Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to discuss extending the U.N. mandate in Angola, which expires on Jan. 31.

In Luanda, armed mobs attacked merchants believed to be from neighbouring Zaire in several city markets Friday, apparently in response to unconfirmed government reports that Zairean troops were fighting alongside the rebels in northern Angola.

An estimated half million Zaireans live in the Angolan capital. Many are Angolans who fled to Zaire in the 1960s during the war against Portuguese rule.

Fierce fighting has been reported in the past 10 days in Huambo, the headquarters of UNITA — the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola. UNITA radio said government aerial bombardment had killed at least 1,000 people.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

De Klerk's popularity 'at lowest level'

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Reformist leader F.W. De Klerk's popularity has dropped to its lowest level since he became South Africa's president in 1989, a poll released Friday said. "Results indicate the lowest level of confidence, by both races (blacks and whites), since he became state president," said Christine Woessner, deputy managing director of the Markinor Research Group which conducted the Markinor poll. Mr. De Klerk has been hard hit by political turmoil, escalating violence and economic recession since his referendum in March last year on democratic reforms which he won with a 68.7 per cent majority among the country's five million whites. The poll carried out in November said confidence in Mr. De Klerk's ability to lead the country "very well" had dropped among whites to 25 per cent from 46 per cent in May last year, and among blacks to eight per cent from 28 per cent. "President De Klerk has lost all the ground he gained in the May 1992 survey and more," Ms. Woessner said.

Malta hopes to join EC

LISBON (R) — Maltese Prime Minister Eddie Fenech Adami said he hoped his Mediterranean island could join the European Community (EC) in the next round of enlargement. Mr. Fenech Adami told reporters after talks with Portuguese Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva that he expected the European Community's Executive Commission to give a favourable opinion on Malta's 1990 application to join the EC soon. Entry negotiations could then proceed in parallel with those of Norway, which is also awaiting a favourable "avis" from the Commission, he added. "In the same way as negotiations with Norway are going to open once there is an avis... once a positive avis is published there will be no reason why negotiations for the accession of Malta should not open as well," Mr. Fenech Adami said. "I hope to see Malta within the next enlargement of the Community," he added.

4 new ministers take office in Bonn

BONN (R) — Four new German ministers were sworn in at a limited reshuffle of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's centre-right coalition cabinet. Former banker Guenter Rexrodt, 51, became new economics minister, the most important post affected. Mr. Rexrodt, from the Liberal Free Democrats (FDP) who are junior coalition partners, replaced Juergen Moellmann after he quit this month in an influence-peddling scandal. Wolfgang Boetsch, 54, took the oath of office before parliament as new post and telecommunications minister. Mr. Boetsch, long-time parliamentary leader of the right-wing Christian Social Union (CSU), will quickly be tested on key issues of postal reform and mobile telephones. Jochen Borchert, from Kohl's own Christian Democrats (CDU), became the new agriculture minister to replace Ignaz Kiechle, who retired. Matthias Wissmann, a CDU economics spokesman, became new research and technology minister.

Charles should still be king — poll

LONDON (R) — Prince Charles's relationship with a married woman has sullied the monarchy's reputation but most Britons think he should still become king, according to an opinion poll. And a majority of people questioned for the poll in the Daily Express said they would be quite happy for the heir to the throne to marry his friend Camilla Parker-Bowles if he was divorced from his estranged wife Princess Diana. Of those questioned for the ICM Survey, seven out of 10 said the publication of an intimate telephone conversation widely held to be between the prince and Mrs. Parker-Bowles, a married mother of two, had damaged the monarchy. But 59 per cent were in favour of Prince Charles succeeding his mother Queen Elizabeth. About the same number said they would be quite happy for him to marry again if he wished.

Malaysian sultans lose more perks

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Malaysia Friday stripped more privileges from its nine hereditary rulers, who have opposed efforts to remove their immunity from the law. International Trade and Industry Minister Rafidah Aziz said the nine sultans would no longer be given shares in government companies that go public or be issued business licences. "My ministry had previously allocated 100,000 shares of Edaran Otomobil Nasional (EON) to each sultan. Such allocations will no longer be made," she was quoted as saying by the national Bernama News Agency. EON is the state-controlled distributor of Malaysia's national car, Proton Saga. She said the government had previously approved business permits for a sultan, his wife and palace officials to operate rice mills and even lorries. The government and sultans are at loggerheads over plans to remove the rulers' legal immunity. Malaysia's parliament early this week endorsed constitutional amendments to divest the rulers of their legal immunity and their power to pardon family members of criminal charges.

Lithuanian presidential race starts

VILNIUS (R) — Lithuania's presidential race started officially Saturday with acting head of state Algirdas Brazauskas a clear favourite in opinion polls. The Baltic nation of 3.5 million people will have to choose of Feb. 14 between ex-Communist turned nationalist Brazauskas and his only rival, Stasys Lozoraitis, currently ambassador to the United States. Five other contenders failed to obtain the required 20,000 signatures to stand in the election. An opinion poll carried out this week by Lithuanian Television and radio showed 51 per cent of voters favour Brazauskas while only 26 per cent support Lozoraitis.

COLUMN

More Japan boys have fits after video games

TOKYO (R) — Two boys in northern Japan were taken to hospital after suffering epileptic fits while playing video games, the latest in a series of such incidents. The boys, aged 10 and 11, from Kushiro in eastern Hokkaido, had fits while playing the games. "These fits do not last long and there was no need for them to spend the night at the hospital," a doctor at the Kushiro Citizen's Hospital said. He said an over-sensitivity to light was the most likely cause. Doctors have confirmed at least 16 similar cases in Japan and the Health Ministry said it would set up a panel to study the effects of video games on children. Britain launched its own study this month following reports that two boys in Wales had fits while playing video games. Video games sold in Europe and the United States by Japanese game giants Nintendo and Sega enterprises already carry warning labels. Nintendo plans to put warnings on products sold in Japan from next month. Sega has similar plans. Nintendo, which has a 90 per cent domestic market share for home video games, has 700 million in use worldwide.

Carreras concert pulls in the big notes

TOKYO (R) — Japanese opera buffs, known for their willingness to pay big money for tickets, will have a chance to splash out as much as 80,000 yen (\$641) for a seat when Spanish tenor Jose Carreras visits Tokyo. That is the going rate at a charity concert planned for March, the proceeds of which will go towards the fight against leukaemia. "Japanese are willing to pay for high-class culture and this is for a good cause," a concert organiser said. Carreras himself recovered from leukaemia in 1988 after doctors had given him a one in 10 chance of survival.

Miss Whiplash turns up in Florida

LONDON (R) — The disappearance of Britain's best-known prostitute seems to have been elaborately planned, police said, suggesting publicity rather than crime was the main ingredient. Fears grew for Linda St. Clair when she failed to turn up to a meeting with journalists in the southern resort town of Brighton at the weekend, where she was planning to discuss a "dirty file" on members of parliament. Police suspect that the "tart with a heart," as she likes to be known, may have spirited herself away as a publicity stunt to promote her new book or to avoid a huge tax bill.

Cinema dispenses modernity with nostalgia

LONDON (R) — A cinema in the heart of London's entertainment district is restoring the back-row "love seats" that brought romance to earlier generations of filmgoers. But each of the 14 double seats being introduced by the Prince Charles Cinema on Feb. 14 — St. Valentine's Day — will be provided with a discreet condom dispenser, in line with modern safe-sex teaching. "We don't expect they will be used in the back row but probably pretty soon afterwards," a management spokesman said.

Canadians put a stop to sign dispute

MONTREAL (R) — After careful reflection, Quebec's language police have decided that "stop" is a legal French word, and therefore no longer needs to be replaced with the word "arret" on stop signs. The French word for stop was also found acceptable but municipalities will have to make a choice and stop putting both words on signs by late 1996. "The two words are French," said a provincial spokesman. The new ruling rescinds a 1989 order requiring municipalities to get rid of "stop/arret" signs and replace them with "arret" only by Jan. 1, 1993.

Jail switch pair no budding geniuses

LOS ANGELES (R) — A friend in need is a friend indeed, so when Wilfred Genus was sentenced to 15 days in jail he asked his old buddy, Albert Flowers, to serve the sentence for him, and Flowers agreed. But Genus, 20, was caught when he visited the jail where Flowers, 32, was incarcerated in his place. Since he had cocaine and a pistol with him, he faces 10 years in prison.